A

MODEST

AND

Cleer Anſvver

TO

Mr. *Ball's* Diſcourſe

OF

Set Formes

OF

PRAYER.

Written by the Reverend and Learned *John Cotton*, B. D. and Teacher of the Church of Chriſt at *Boſton* in *New-England*.

Publiſhed for the Benefit of thoſe who deſire ſatisfaction in that Point.

LONDON; Printed for *H. Overton* in *Popes-Head* Alley. 1

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To the Courteous Reader.

WE think it not meet, to fall a commending the Author of this work, who hath been ſo long precious in the hearts of all the Saints, and for his learning, pains and piety ſo famous in the Churches of Chriſt; that his own Works may praiſe him in the Gate, though we be ſilent. Neither ſhall we need (as uſually men do in their Epiſtles) to ſet gloſſes upon the work, thy ſelf (if thou weigheſt it with a ſerious and impartial ſpirit) we believe, will do it, and ſave us that labour. This only we ſay, thou wilt diſcern (as ſome other godly learned, who have peruſed it before alſo have done) ſuch a cleer judgement, dexte-

rous aptneſs, and pithy plainneſſe in a moderate and brotherly ſtile in all his Anſwers, that thou wilt think thou ſeeſt the very ſpirit of the Author *breathing in every page and line. Now, the Father of lights clear all our minds, that if his bleſſed will ſo be, we may think and judge, and ſpeak and write the ſame thing; And the God of all Grace warm our hearts with a love of ſuch truths as we doe know, that we may walk in the light and power thereof, to the praiſe of his Grace, till we all meet in one, and ſee him as he is, and ſo be filled with all the fulneſſe of God himſelf for evermore,* Amen.

ADVERTISEMENTS UPON The Diſcourſe of ſet-forms of PRAYER.

YOur Preface touching the Definition, and nature of prayer, I inſiſt not upon; as not much material to the cleering of the Cauſe in hand: it is enough in this Caſe, to premiſe what prayer in Generall is, and what is lawfull prayer: Prayer (in generall, comprehending both lawfull and unlawfull) is the lifting up (or powring out) of the Deſires of the heart for Divine bleſſings; Divine I ſay, that is, for ſuch as God only can give, either for the nature, or kind of the thing given, or for the manner of giving.

Lawfull prayer, is a lifting up (or powring out) of the deſires of the heart unto God, for Divine bleſſings, according to his will in the nam-

CHAP. I.

The State of the Queſtion.

FOr ſtating of the *Queſtion*, you give ſix Rules, of which I will only touch ſo many, as do more neerly touch upon the Cauſe.

In your firſt Rule you ſay, it is not a Prayer, as penned, or printed, but as rehearſed, with underſtanding, feeling of wants, humility, confidence.

Anſw. Nor is it a prayer as rehearſed, though rehearſed with underſtanding, feeling of wants, humility, confidence, unleſſe a man therein powre out his *own deſires* unto God; for I may read and rehearſe a printed Prayer (ſay one of *Davids* propheticall prayers againſt the enemies of the Church) yea, I may read it with underſtanding, with feeling of the wants of ſuch a mercy, and alſo with humility, (in conſcience of the Churches unworthineſſe of ſuch a mercy, and with confidence that God will do for the Church now, as *David* prayed then, *&c.* Yet this will not be my prayer, unleſſe I put up mine own deſires in it; but about this there is no queſtion.

Anſw. 2. Though it be not a prayer, as penned or printed, yet is a means, and help and form of prayer, which either muſt find a warrant from the

the Word, or fall under the breach of the second Commandement.

In the second Rule you say, the controversie is not of this or that prescript form of Prayer in particular, much lesse of one for substance of matter, faulty and erronious: But of a prescript form of prayer in generall, whether it be lawfull to use any set form of prayer at all, though for the matter thereof never so sound and allowable.

Answ. But so to put the State of the *Question*, is indeed, to leade your self and others into temptations: for if it may be once obtained: that some prescript form is lawfull in the Generall, this in the Theory will straight be reduced to this practice, to perswade men to joyn in such a prescript form of prayer as is justly liable to manifold exceptions, both for matter and manner.

If such as were compelled to worship the Lord before the golden Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, should put the state of the *Question*, not of such particular Calves, but of Calves, or Cherubims in generall (for one form of Cherubims were like Calves) whether it be not lawfull to worship the Lord before any Cherubims at all? It may be easily conceived, what the issue would be, the *Question* admitteth the lawfulnesse of some Cherubims in Generall (which is out of question.) The practice will conclude the lawfulnesse of *Jeroboams* Calves in particular; which was the sin which made *Israel* to sin.

2. *Your fift Rule acknowledgeth that neither Christ nor his Apostles, prescribed any set form of prayer, and therefore that no prescript form of prayer or Lyturgie is simply necessary.*

Anſw. But this argueth not only no neceſſity of preſcript forms, but alſo no expediency thereof to the edification of the Church, unleſſe it might be preſumed that there is ſome help or means of Gods worſhip expedient to the edification of the Church, which never came into the heart of Chriſt and of his Apoſtles to commend unto the Church.

In your ſixt Rule you profeſſe, you never held it lawfull, to tye any mans ſelfe, or to be tyed alwayes to a ſet form of Prayer: as knowing that our requeſts are to be framed according to the preſent neceſſity and occaſion.

Anſw. But by the ſame reaſon, neither will it be lawfull to be tyed at any time to an ordinary uſe of any ſet form of prayer at all: for there is no change of time wherein the Church hath not ſome ſpeciall occaſion to change their *Petitions*, either by adding ſome *Petitions* more than formerly were needfull, or by taking away ſome *Petitions* which were formerly needfull (it may be at the laſt meeting) which are not needfull now: And look upon what grounds it may be lawfull to tye others, or to be tyed by them, to a ſet forme to day, upon the ſame grounds it will be as lawfull to tye them, and to be tyed by them to morrow, the next *Saboth* as well as this, and the third *Saboth* as well as both, and all *Saboths* as well as ſome.

If tying to ſet forms be lawfull, and thought expedient, for uniformity in Gods worſhip one day; the ſame uniformity is as expedient to be attended to in every *Saboth*, as in one: or if tying to ſet forms be requiſite to ſupply the defects of the gifts of ignorant Miniſters, then thereby a cloak is made for the covering and ſheltering of ignorant Miniſters;

Miniſters: who had more need to be ſhouldred ſpeedily out of the Church, than to be ſheltered therein one day to an end. And beſides, if ſuch ſet forms be preſcribed for the ſuccour of ignorant Miniſters, then ſuch Miniſters as have received the gift of prayer, have no need at any time, nor uſe of preſcribed and ſet forms of prayer at all.

Object. *And if it be ſaid that it is not intended, to make it lawfull at any time, to tye or to be tyed to a ſet form of Prayer, ſo as to offer up no more, nor fewer Petitions than what are preſcribed in the Book, but only to warrant the lawfullneſſe of ſome ſet forms of Prayer for ſome occaſions.*

Anſw. It may be juſtly demanded, whether the ſame authority which tyeth to a ſet form of prayer, for ſuch or ſuch occaſions, may not as well tye to a ſet form of prayer for all other occaſions, and if authority may tye the Church to any ſet form of prayer upon any occaſion, whether may not the ſame Authority by the ſame Rule, forbid all other forms of prayers beſides upon the ſame occaſion.

Diſc. *In Brief (ſay you) the controverſie is, whether it be not lawfull to read a Prayer upon a book, or to make our deſires known in a ſet form of words, when the things we beg, are allowable, fit, and neceſſary, and when it is done with underſtanding, feeling of our wants, faith in Gods promiſes, and reverence of his Majeſty.*

Which *Queſtion* you ſpread forth into three branches.

Whether it be lawfull in private to uſe a ſet form of prayer, or upon any occaſion to read a prayer, a prayer upon a Book.

Whether a ſet form of prayer ſound, and pertinent, for

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the substance of the matter, grave and simple for the order and manner, not prejudising, abridging, or hindering by the length thereof, the preaching of the Word; may in any sort be tollerated in the Church, or read by the Minister in the publique Congregation.

In case it should be unlawfull for the Minister or the Master of the Family to read a prescript form of prayer, yet whether it should be unlawfull to be present at such assemblies.

Your Assertion is, that a stinted form of prayer is lawfull to be used both in publique and private, &c. And though it should be sin in the Minister or in the Governour of the family, yet may the people in the Congregation, and the inferiour in the family be present at such prayers without sin or scruple of conscience?

Answ. How far we go along with you in the *Question* thus stated and where we stick, may be expressed in these particulars.

First, We grant, a Christian man whether Minister, or of private place, may by the gift of prayer which he hath received, compile to himself a set form of prayer, and may use the same for his prayer, whether in publique or private according to his place: yet so, as not to limit himself to those words: seeing he knoweth not what further occasion may be given him of inlarging his Petitions, by new occurrences of matters from Gods providence, and by the inlargement of the help of Gods Spirit: nor so to limit himselfe as to stick long in any set form of prayer least it turn into a customary, and empty form, contrary to the watchfullnesse unto Prayer, which must be Religiously kept of all growing Christians.

2. A man may give unto another holy direc-

tions

ctions, and rules for Prayer, and may also set down some forms of prayer as examples of such rules, but not to prescribe them as set forms to them, to be used by them for their Prayers.

3. A man that readeth a form of Prayer in a Book, may be so affected with it, as in the desires of his heart to go along with it, and to use it for his present prayer, as it may thus fall out in reading one of *Calvins* prayers, printed after his Lectures, or such other like.

4. We deny not, but a man that is affected with some Petitions in a Prayer devised by others, he may lawfully make use of them, and interfert them ordinarily into his own Prayers; But not to take up an intire form of Prayer devised by another, and to make it his own ordinary form of Prayer.

5. We grant Magistrates or other Christians may commend some Heads or Petitions to the Church according to the present state of things (which the Church as they see fit) may present and commend to God in their Prayers.

Thus far we consent, but farther we cannot go, but do rather conceive it to be unlawfull.

1. To set a part, and take up a set form of Prayer, and to use it as an ordinary prayer, that which is devised by others, whom God hath not called to be a mouth to me.

2. We conceive it also to be unlawfull to bring in ordinarily any other Books, into the publique worship of God, in the Church, besides the Book of God, and therefore do see no more warrant to read out of a Prayer Book, the publique Prayers of a Church: then out of a book of *Homilyes* to read

read the publique Sermons of the Miniſters of the Church.

3. We account it alike (if not more unlawfull) for *Anceſtors* to preſcribe or injoyn ſet forms of Prayers to their poſterity, or for one Church to preſcribe ſet forms of Prayer unto another.

4. We hold it in like manner unlawfull, for one Church to receive ſuch ſet forms of Prayer from another, and to uſe them for their own Prayers.

5. We take it to be unlawfull alſo, for the people of God to joyn in ſuch prayers, which are ſo diviſed and preſcribed to be read unto them, and to be offered up in their names, as their prayers.

To apply theſe things more punctually to the particular branches of the *Queſtion*, as they are propoſed, and ſtated by you.

For your firſt branch, we do not make it a controverſie, whether it be lawfull to make known our deſires in a ſet form of words, in ſuch ſence as we granted above in our firſt point of conſent: nor do we hold it unlawfull to read a prayer upon a book and therein to expreſſe our deſires in ſuch ſort as we granted in our third point of conſent.

But nevertheleſſe, we do not diſcern it to be lawfull no not in private to uſe ordinarily a ſet form of prayer deviſed by others, nor to read ſuch a prayer out of a book, for the ordinary prayer of a mans ſelf much leſſe of his *Family*.

For your ſecond Branch, though we neither deny the uſe of ſet form in private, nor in publique, ſo it be compiled by a mans own gifts, or by thoſe whom God calleth to be his mouth.

Yet

Yet we dare not allow the reading of a set form of publique prayer out of a Book penned for the purpose, and those prayers compiled by the members of one Congregation and imposed upon others.

3. For your third Branch, we for our parts cannot justifie it to be lawfull for to be present, either in the family or in the congregation where, and when such prescript forms are read for the prayers of the company, as to joyn with them, or to seem to joyn with them in such worship.

But proceed we now to consider the weight of the Reasons which you give for your judgement and practice.

CHAP. II.

Wherein your first Reason is propounded and considered.

THat Form of prayer (say you) *is just and lawfull wherein all things essentiall to prayer, and necessarily required in the Word of God may be observed:*

But all things essentiall to prayer, and necessarily required in the Word of God may be observed in read prayer, or in a prescript forme; what is required in holy prayer, more then that the matter be allowable and fit, the manner holy, reverend, faithfull, your hearts laid open, and petitions forced with as strong, or stronger Reasons than we are able of our selves to presse them with all; and may not a prayer holy and fit for the matter

ter thereof be read with knowledge, feeling of our wants, earneſtneſſe of our deſires, holineſſe of our affection, and faith in Gods promiſes.

Anſw. There is more required to a faithfull holy prayer, then allowable and fit matter, and holy inward manner, in the good affections of the heart, for an outward holy manner is required likewiſe, elſe a man might pray to God allowable and fit petitions before an Image; and I deny not, but that God may ſometimes aſſiſt a man in ſuch a prayer with holy manner of inward gracious affections: as for inſtance, holy *Bilney* might find his heart warmed in prayer to Chriſt, when he look'd at him as really preſent in the Sacrament, or elſe he would never have called ſo zealouſly on the people to turn all that adoration of dead Images to the adoration of Chriſt in the bleſſed Sacrament; nevertheleſſe ſuch a prayer was unlawfull through a defect in the outward manner of it: an outward means being called in for help in prayer, which God had not ſanctified for that end.

Let me give you another inſtance, when the *Corinthians* prayed in the Church publiquely, in the Spirit, but withall in a ſtrange tongue, their prayer wanted not allowable and fit matter, nor holy inward manner (for they prayed in the ſpirit) yet the prayer was unlawfull through defect of an outward holy manner, becauſe it being put up in a ſtrange tongue before others, did not tend to the edification of others: In the caſe in hand, though prayer upon a Book preſcribed by the authority of man may ſometimes be furniſhed with allowable and fit matter, and ſometimes uttered with inward holy affections; yet ſtill it will be unlaw-

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full through the defect of an outward holy manner. If such a prescribed book be found (as we conceive it will) an Image or help to prayer, devised by men, but not ordained by God, and so no better than an Image forbidden in the second Commandement.

Disc. In reading the Scriptures, the eye doth lead the heart, and yet it may be read with judgement, reverence, meekneſſe, joy, and why may not the like affections be moved in read prayer?

Answ. Reading of Scriptures is an Ordinance of God, and not an Image or imagination of man; and therefore God not only may assist and blesse the reading of the Scriptures, with inward good affections, but is usually wonted so to do in an honest and good heart, as delighting to breath in his own Ordinances: If it could be proved, that the reading of a prescript form of prayer upon a Book were an Ordinance of God sanctified for the edification of the Church (as the reading of the Scriptures is) we might ordinarily expect the like assistance and blessing in reading of the one as well as of the other; the comparison would be more suitable, if instead of reading the Scriptures, were put the reading of Sermons and Homilies in the Church, for which we find as little warrant as for reading of Prayers; nor can we expect a greater blessing upon the one then upon the other; we do not deny that read prayer may lead and affect the heart, as may a Sermon read at home: But then neither is such a read prayer prescribed by others, nor set a part by me as my prayer; no more than the reading of such a Sermon is my preaching: which is not because the heart and

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the eye are at variance in ſuch a caſe (as your diſcourſe ſpeaketh) but becauſe God doth not ordinarily delight to bleſſe the heart with gracious affections, when the eyes go a whoring after the imaginations and inventi ons of men.

Diſc. *Aſaph and his Brethren could praiſe God in a form of words, ſet down by the Prophet David; and if a ſet form of words may be allowed in thankſgiving (which is one part of prayer) it cannot be condemned in petitions.*

Anſw. We do not deny a ſet-form either of Petition or of thankſ-giving appointed by God, either to be read or ſung, but we deny that God hath allowed either the ordinary officers in his Church (whether *Prieſts* or *Levites* in the old Teſtament, or *Paſtors* and *Teachers* in the new) to appoint ſuch forms of read prayers for the Church, or the Church to take up ſuch forms of read prayers from them; God that hath forbidden us to make any graven Image to our ſelves, hath not forbidden or limited himſelf to deviſe and preſcribe what forms of worſhip himſelf ſhall ſee good for our uſe; the pains which are taken to paralell petitions and thankſgiving might have been ſpared; we neither refuſe the forms of the one, nor of the other, ſuch as are commended to us of God in his Word; the eye doth not hinder the affection of the heart in reading ſuch things as God hath appointed to be read; he that giveth the Word to be read, can give the affections to read it withall, and hath promiſed ſo to do, which the ſons of men that give us preſcript forms of prayer to be read cannot doe.

Diſc.

Disc. *Whatsoever hath the true matter and form of prayer, is truly and properly prayer; but a prescript form of prayer, sound, and fit for matter; grave for manner of penning, read as prayer with knowledge, faith, reverence and fervency of affection, hath the true matter and form of prayer.*

Answ. The Argument doth not conclude the *Question* in hand; we might grant the conclusion without prejudice to the cause, for a prescript form of prayer may have the true matter, and essential form of prayer, and so be (for substance) truly and properly a prayer, and yet not every way an acceptable and lawfull worship of God, through defect of some circumstances which may pertain to externall forme; Baptisme may be properly and truly baptisme, as wanting neither true matter nor form, when it is dispenced by a Minister of the Gospel to a believer or his seed by the dipping or sprinkling of water upon him, *In the name of the Father, the Sonne and the Holy Ghost*, and yet not every way a lawfull worship of God, if it be administred in an outward form corrupted with the devises of men: as with Salt, Cream, Spittle, Crosse, and the like; so is the case here; a prescript form of prayer may consist of lawfull fit petitions, and be delivered with a faithfull holy humble spirit, and so be truly and properly prayer, and yet fall short of some rule requisite to be attended to make it a lawfull worship of God, to wit, if it be offered to God in a strange Tongue or before an Image, or by the help of an Image; such as we conceive a

preſcript form of words to be injoyned and impoſed, to be read upon a book for the Prayers of the Church.

Anſw. 2. If by Matter and Form be meant not only Internall and Eſſential forme; but externall alſo. Then we deny that a preſcript form of prayer injoyned to be read upon a Book, is a lawfull externall form of prayer; no more than a preſcript form of Homilies is a lawfull externall form of preaching; Theſe Anſwers ſeem to us ſufficient and unavoidable, and we reſt in them; but the other Anſwers which are alledged by you in your Diſcourſe, and much and often beaten upon you, though it was delivered by one, whoſe works praiſe him in the gates, throughout all the Churches of the Saints: yet we do not inſiſt upon it, as not willing to turn aſide to unneceſſary diſputes, ſtinted ſet forms we do not look at, as lawfull to them that need them; but unlawfull to them that need them not: For though there be a good uſe of the diſtinction in this caſe (as we ſhall ſee anon) yet not in this caſe, where the neceſſity ariſeth not from Gods Commandement, but from the ſinfull defect of the Creature, for ſupply whereof God hath ordained ſufficient help other wayes.

But yet in reply which you make to the Anſwer, you give a diſtinction liable to the ſame exception which your ſelf take againſt that Anſwer: For that Anſwer conſiſting of a diſtinction of arbitrary and neceſſary help.

Your Diſcourſe rejecteth it as a diſtinction not grounded upon the Word of God, which in Divinity is (as you ſay) *an unwritten tradition; and is this diſtinction of your own any better?*

Helps ſay you and ſurtherances in Gods Service, are of two ſorts, ſome in nature and uſe, the ſame with the true worſhip of God, inſtituted by his highneſſe, and theſe are unlawfull, becauſe they are deviſed; and others concern the Method, Phraſe of Speech, outward manner of celebration, onely as meer circumſtances, and theſe are not forbidden.

A diſtinction ungrounded upon the Word, & ſo no better than an unwritten tradition, and withall, both the parts imply a falſ-hood; for a prayer which a Miniſter deviſeth for his own, and his peoples uſe, before the Sermon, is in nature and uſe the ſame with the true worſhip of God inſtituted by his highneſſe; yet it is not unlawfull becauſe it is deviſed, for it is deviſed by him, who is called of God to deviſe and indite it, as *David* did, *Pſal.* 45. *v.* 1. and all the reſt, and that by help of the Spirit of prayer: again, on the other part, a preſcribed Homilie doth conſerve the method, phraſe of ſpeech, outward manner of celebration, only as a meer circumſtance; yet no Word of God ever allowed it to be read for the publick preaching of the Word unto the people.

It is true which the *Diſcourſe* ſpeaketh of the *Method* of Sermons, deviſed or ſtudied by ſuch as Preach them, there may be ſome liberty, whether to preach by doctrine, reaſon and uſe, or ſome other way; the like may be ſaid of forms

of *Chatechiſmes*, *Bleſſings*, and *Baptiſmes*: But the reaſon of this liberty is becauſe we find in *Scripture* ſeverall forms of all theſe, and therefore we limit or preſcribe no ſet forms to any; *Pauls* Epiſtle to the *Romans* is carried along by Doctrine, reaſons and uſes, and ſo are ſundry more of his Epiſtles. But Chriſts Sermon on the *Mount*, is carried in another *Method*: *The Apoſtles Catechiſe is of one form*, Heb. 6. 1, 2. *Davids of another*, Pſal. 34. 11, 12, 13, 14. *The Prieſts Bleſſings, were of one form*, Numb. 6. 23. to 26. *The Apoſtles Bleſſings of another*. 2 Cor. 12. 13. 2 Theſ. 3. 17, 18. Heb. 13. 20, 21. Jude 24. 25. *The forms of baptizing did alſo ſometimes vary, ſome uſing the words of our Saviour*, Math. 28. 19. *Others another form of words*, Acts 19. 5. The thing is this, where God hath uſed variety of forms, he leaveth us at liberty to uſe that one form or the other; But to gather a liberty to preſcribe and limit a ſet form of any of theſe, where God hath not limited; is to pervert and abuſe the power of the keyes of Chriſts Kingdome: to wit, to bind where Chriſt looſeth, but your *Objection* is (as you ſay) anſwered by others, and that more ſafely.

Diſc. *That mens inventions in the ſervice of God are forbidden in the ſecond Commandement*: *But Book-Prayer is an Invention of men*?

To this your *Diſcourſe* replyeth by retorting upon a former *Anſwer*, which we ſaid afore, we did not make uſe of in this caſe.

You reply again the *Objection* it ſelf is of no weight, for by this reaſon all ſet forms of *Catechiſmes*,

chiſmes, ſtudied *Sermons*, Interpretations of *Scripture*, diviſions of it into *Sections* and *Chapters*, reading one part this week, and another the next, conceived prayer it ſelf may be diſallowed.

Anſw. Touching ſet forms of *Catechiſme*, we do willingly approve diligent attendance to the *Catechiſing* of youth, and *Novices* in any form tending to Edification; but to deviſe and preſcribe a ſet form of words, wherein all the *Queſtions* and *Anſwers* ſhall run, and no other; we know no warrant for that from *Scripture*, if God would have his people limited to a ſet form of words in catechizing: he would himſelf have preſcribed ſome ſet form of his own inſpiration, which might be defective in no principles, nor incommodious in any expreſſion.

2. What though there might be ſome colour to put a ſet form of words of catechiſme into the mouths of Children and Novices, the better to help their memory and capacities; will it therefore argue it to be a reaſonable ſervice of God, to put a ſet form of words and prayers, into the mouths of Miniſters to help their memories and capacities, in powring out their own and the Churches Petitions unto God.

Studied *Sermons* are of another nature, it is an Ordinance of God that *Sermons* ſhould be ſtudied, before preached; *Jude* made it his whole ſtudy, πᾶσαν σπουδὴν to write his Epiſtle, *Jude* 3. How much more ought we to make it our whole ſtudy to preach: who are not ſo

immediately inſpired. *Solomon* gave good heed and ſought out to find, and ſet in order fit words and matter for the edification of the people, *Eccleſ.* 12. 9, 10. and behold leſſe than *Solomon* are Miniſters here, though in reſpect of the cleer diſcerning the Myſteries of Chriſt, *The leaſt in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.* *Timothy* is exhorted to give attendance to reading, Meditation, Doctrine, to meditate thereon, to give himſelf wholly to them, that his profiting might appear to all: That he might ſhew himſelf approved unto God, A workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, 1 *Tim.* 4. 13, 14, 15. with 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. But give me leave to ſpeak without offence: You ſeem to me in this point to take too much liberty, in a ſerious cauſe to play upon equivocation: It is true, in ſtudying a Sermon the Preacher uſeth his Invention and Judgement; and in that ſence his Sermon may be called mans Invention: But you are not ignorant, we ſpeak in this cauſe of ſuch inventions of men, as God hath given neither Commandement nor direction for in his Word; In which ſence a ſtudied Sermon is no more a mans Invention, than a ſtudied anſwer, which *Solomon* commendeth as a path of the Righteous, *Prov:* 15. 28. The like may be ſaid of the next inſtance, which is, *Interpretation of Scriptures*, as alſo, *a conceived Prayer*: Interpretation of *Scripture* is from a ſpiritual gift, which God hath given, and commanded to be uſed for the edification of his Church, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26. *Nehem.* 8. 8. So is Prayer conceived from a

ſpirit

spirit and gift of prayer, which is to be used also and attended to, as a principall part of the Ministeriall office, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. *Acts* 6. 4.

Obj: *If it be said, but I may take an Interpretation, or Translation of Scripture from others, and therefore a form of Prayers from others also?*

Answ. 1. There is a broad difference betwixt an Interpretation of *Scripture*, as it is put for translation of *Scripture*, and read Prayer, for reading of *Scripture* in the Church is an ordinance of God; so is the reading of it in a tongue which the people understandeth, and therefore it is an ordinance of God that the Word be read in some translation.

But the reading of a prayer, for the prayers of the Church is no ordinance of God, therefore there is not the like ground from the Word to make use of *Prayer-Books*, to read prayers, as to make use of a printed Bible for the reading of the Word.

2. Every Minister that hath understanding of the originall languages wherein the *Scripture* was written, ought to make use of his own gift in examining the truth of the translation which he readeth unto the Church, which will not be allowed in prescript *Lyturgies*: As for the division of Scriptures into *Sections* and *Chapters*, and the reading of one part this *Week*, and the other next; It is certain, division of *Scripture* is antient, even from the times of the *Prophets*: And evident it is, the whole Scripture cannot be read over in one day: And therefore it is from God, that some divisions of

Scriptures be obſerved, according to the variety of matter therein contained, and diſtinctly devideth it ſelfe, and conſequently it is from God, that one part of it be read at this Aſſembly another at the next, becauſe all cannot be read at once.

And yet we know no warrant that one Church ſhould preſcribe another, what diviſion to make of the Scriptures, or what part of it ſhould be read this day, and what the next, what God hath left free let no man limit.

Diſc. *Preaching is commanded of God; ſo is interpretation of Scripture, but phraſe and method of Interpretation is of men: The matter of the Scripture is the immediate Word of God, but the Word and phraſe, which are Veſſels to convey this truth to us (I ſpeak of Tranſlations not of the Originall Text) are humane and not of God, by immediate inſpiration, God commandeth us to call upon him, both in publique and private, but the words in which we expreſſe our deſires, are our own, both in conceived and ſtinted Prayer.*

Anſw. It is true preaching of the Word and the Interpretation of the Word are of God, but the phraſe and Method is of men, yet ſo of men as they have commandement and warrant from God, to preach and interpret the Word: and not in what phraſe and Method pleaſes themſelves: nor in ſuch words as mans wiſdome teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, 1 Cor. 2. 13. Nor ſo from men as that the men of one Church may deviſe a ſet form thereof, and binde all men, as well of other Churches as

their

their own, to this or that manner of phraſe, or Method, the like is to be ſaid of prayer alſo.

But when your *Diſcourſe* ſaith, that the words wherein we expreſſe our deſires are our own in conceived and ſtinted prayer, you might as well have ſaid, that the words wherein we deliver our Sermons are our own; both in conceived Sermons, and in ſtinted *Homilies*.

Diſc. *Theſe two kinds of Prayer (conceived and ſtinted) agree in their Author, Matter, Form, Object, end, and common nature; the one is no more an Invention of man than the other: ſo then deviſed Worſhip is unlawfull but not a worſhip in a form of words deviſed.*

Anſw. And ſo might we ſay of prayer to God before an Image, and prayer without an Image; they are two kinds of prayer that agree in their Author, matter, form, object, end, and common nature, yet we cannot ſay the one is more an invention of men than the other: As deviſed Worſhip is unlawfull, ſo are deviſed forms, and means of worſhip unlawfull alſo: of which ſort ſuch ſet forms of words be as are deviſed and compoſed by the officers of one Congregation, and impoſed upon the brethren of another Congregation, for the forms of their prayers.

Anſw. 2. We cannot ſay (as you do) that ſuch conceived and ſtinted forms agree in their Authors, for I am not the Author of the matter of that prayer which another man compoſed, and was the Author of, and is now ſtinted and preſcribed to me; no more then I can be ſaid

to

to be the Author of that Sermon which another man indited. *Battyllus* was not the Authour of *Virgil's* Verses.

Though he reſiteth them as his own, *Virgil* juſtly challengeth his own out of his hand, *Hos ego verſiculos feci, &c.* Nor can we ſay that ſuch conceived or ſtinted forms agree in their form, if by form be meant externall form, it is not the ſame form of walking to walk with Crutches, and to walk upright: It is not the ſame form of prayer, to pray with help of mens inventions, and with ſuch helps only as the Holy Ghoſt ſupplyeth: which alſo hindereth that they cannot be ſaid to agree in their common nature; The one being a lawfull form of prayer, the other unlawfull; And therefore when your Diſcourſe ſaith, that conceived and ſtinted prayer, the one is no more the invention of man than the other, we cannot underſtand the truth of that: for in conceived prayer, the *S*pirit of God within us teacheth us what to pray. And for that the Ordinance and Word of God is plain, *Rom.* 8. 26. But in ſtinted prayer the matter is not ſuggeſted or indited to us by the Spirit of God within us, but preſcribed and impoſed upon us, by the will, wiſdome and authority of men; whom the Holy Ghoſt hath not called to ſuch a work: as therefore a deviſed worſhip is unlawfull; ſo it is unlawfull to worſhip God in a form of words deviſed by the Officers of one Congregation, and preſcribed and impoſed upon others.

Diſc. *Nay (*ſaith your *Diſcourſe) for the form of words is not worſhip, but the Prayer tendered in that form.*

Anſw. As Prayer is Worſhip, ſo the form in which prayer is offered to God, is *Modus*, or *Medium Cultus*, the manner, or means, or help of Worſhip: which if it be not warranted, and inſtituted of God, it is forbidden in the ſecond *Commandement*: when God forbad his people to worſhip him in ſuch a manner, as the *Gentiles* ſerved their gods, he ordained them a rule to be perpetually obſerved in all ſervice to him, to wit, that we ſhould worſhip him as himſelf hath commanded, which the oppoſition inferreth, that his meaning is not only with ſuch duties, but in ſuch a manner as himſelf hath commanded, without adding ought thereto, or taking ought therefrom, *Deut.* 12. 30, 31, 32. *Now he hath commanded us to pray in the ſpirit*, Eph. 6. 18. which implies not only with ſuch affections as his Spirit kindleth and ſtirreth up, but alſo with ſuch matter and words as his ſpirit helpeth us unto: For his Spirit is ſaid to help us what to pray, which elſe we ſhould not know, *Rom.* 8. 26. Now in a ſtinted preſcript form of prayer, we know what to pray without the Spirit; when we joyn in prayer with another who is our mouth to God, though we know what to pray by his help, yet it is ſuch an help as the Spirit himſelf hath provided, 1 *Cor.* 14. 16.

Diſc. *It followeth in the* Diſcourſe, *that mens inventions in Gods worſhip that be of the ſame nature*

ture and uſe with true worſhip, or with means of worſhip ordained by God, be unlawfull; but method, phraſe, order, of ſpeech deviſed by man, was never judged an invention of man unlawfull.

Anſw. 1. This hath been alledged, and anſwered before, but this further let me adde; 1. That the words imply, that mens inventions that be not of the ſame nature and uſe with the worſhip of God, or with the means thereof are lawfull: whereas it is evident that the making of perfume like unto the incenſe of the Tabernacle, though not to the ſame uſe in Gods worſhip, but to ſmell at, was rejected of God as utterly unlawfull, *Exod.* 30. 38. The making of like things to the ordinances of God, or to the means of worſhip, though not to the like end, but to any religious end, will not be allowed in the ſecond Commandement, as *Gideons* Ephod declareth.

2. Theſe ſet forms of prayer preſcribed to the Churches, we ſee not but that they are of the ſame nature, and enjoyned for the ſame uſe, for which any forms of prayer in Scripture are ordained of God; and therefore by the verdict of your *Diſcourſe* they are unlawfull: For as thoſe forms of prayer in Scripture are given of God to ſupply the Church with fit matter for their petitions, and praiſes upon ſundry occaſions.

And for the uſe to the edification of the Church: ſo the forms now in queſtion are of the like nature, given to the like end, only injoyned with more ſtrictneſſe and ſeverity, which

which maketh both their use lesse profitable, and their burthen more heavy, then Gods own institutions.

3. Method, phrase and order of speech devised by men, was judged an unlawfull invention by *Paul*, when such wisdom of words in preaching become not the simplicity of the Gospel, 1 *Cor.* 2. therefore it cannot be said, that method, phrase and order of speech devised by man, was never judged an unlawfull invention; and surely method, phrase, order of speech devised, and prescribed by one Congregation to another in prayer, doth as little beseem liberty and purity of the Gospel, as the other in preaching did ill become the simplicity of the Gospel.

Disc. *Set prayer is no strange manner of worship, because in it all things required to the nature of true prayer may be observed.*

Answ. This hath been answered before; more goeth to the lawfulnesse of a prayer then the nature of true prayer; defect in any circumstance, though but in externall form, maketh a prayer unlawfull.

Disc. *In what method and frame of speech to pray, we find nothing prescribed of God in particular; neither do we judge any thing necessary, more then that order, decency, and edification be regarded.*

Answ. Be it so, but how then shall men have power to prescribe to the Churches method and form of speech in prayer, when God hath prescribed nothing. The Apostles, who had the largest and highest Commission of any Church

Church governours in the New Testament, yet they had no power to teach, or to prescribe to the Churches any other things then what Christ had commanded them, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. Say not, though no other things, yet Church governours may command such and such manner of those things: for then a further Commission must be shown, where Christ gave to his Apostles, or their successors power to ordain and prescribe such and such manner of the administration of his holy things, as themselves should see good.

But we never saw any such commission held forth to this day from any colour of Scripture light; that only place, 1 *Cor.* 14. 40. which is alledged in this case, is farre off from reaching forth any such authority; for though the place do shew that it is the duty of the Church to administer all the holy things of God, in order and decency, and to edification, and to see that all things be so carried; yet it doth not give to the Church any such power as to make orders, or to ordain forms of decency, or to devise means of edification, which himself hath not ordained; the Church may indeed appoint such orders, the neglect whereof would be disorderly and confusion, as they may appoint one Prophet to speak at once; and when another is called to begin, the first to hold his peace, because the neglect hereof would breed confusion: The Church may appoint such decencies, the neglect whereof would be undecent; as for men to pray bare-headed, and women covered,

vered, becauſe the contrary were uncomely by the light of nature, and civill cuſtome; The Church may appoint, and ought to uſe ſuch helps and means to edification, as the Lord hath inſtituted to that end; but if the Church go beyond the bounds of this power they do at once both exceed the bounds of Apoſtolicall authority, and cut ſhort the bounds of Chriſtian liberty.

Diſc. *A ſet form of prayer is for ſubſtance and nature agreeable to the rules of direction delivered in the word of truth, though for method and word it be humane, as conceived prayer is.*

Anſw. A ſet form of prayer, as it is ſet by one Congregation for another, can find no rule of direction, nor any foot-ſtep thereof in the word of truth.

In ſaying that for method and words, a ſet form of prayer is humane, as conceived prayer is; there is the like liberty taken of Sophiſtry, in an equivocation, which was obſerved before: for though a conceived Prayer may be ſaid to be humane, as it is conceived and indited in the heart of a man, and by man offered as worſhip to God (as all other holy duties be in this ſenſe humane) yet ſuch a conceived prayer being indited by the Spirit of God in the heart of him that prayeth, and being expreſly commanded in the Word: it cannot be truly called an humane invention, which is only ſpoken of thoſe things as have neither commandement, nor pattern from the Word, in which ſenſe we called a ſet form humane.

Diſc.

Diſc. *If our Brethren diſpair not of the goodneſſe of their Cauſe; let them in an orderly Treatiſe ſet down what is neceſſary and eſſentially required, to the nature and being of true Prayer, and then ſhew that ſome one or other of them cannot be obſerved in a ſtinted or Preſcript forme of Prayer, and we will readily yeeld unto them; and ſome Reaſon or pregnant place of Scripture, ſhall put us to ſilence.*

Anſw. We ſee no cauſe to diſpair of the goodneſſe of the cauſe, which we conceive is not ours but Gods; we chooſe rather to bewaile the ſinfulneſſe of our former courſe, then eagerly to diſpute for our preſent proceedings; we all of us have ſinned with our Brethren, and with our Fathers in worſhipping God after the precepts of men, and have as much cauſe to judge our ſelves for it, as you have: To write a Treatiſe of all the requiſites to true prayer, is nothing to the ſtanding or falling of the Cauſe.

As hath been ſaid, prayer may be true, and have all thoſe things which are neceſſary and eſſentially requiſite to true prayer, and yet ſinfully defective in ſome extenall circumſtances: It were much more pertinen to write a Treatiſe of the Second Commandement, whereunto the conſideration of the helps and Forms of Worſhip doth properly belong; & from thence to conſider whether any ſound reaſon at laſt (which you deſire) may not be inferred againſt preſcript Forms of Prayer.

Let us therefore conſider together of the meaning of that *Commandement*, though not in the full latitude of it (for that were not ſo pertinent

tinent to the Cause in hand) but so far as concerneth the present businesse; and yet not seeking thereby, nor striving to put you to silence, but to awaken both our selves and you (if it be the Will of God) to repentance.

The Second *Commandement*, in forbidding Images, forbiddeth not only bodily Images, (Graven or Molten, or Painted) but all spirituall Images also; which are the Imaginations and Inventions of men, whether they be ordained for worship (as *Apocrapha* Scriptures, and the Lawes of men binding the Conscience) or for helps and means of worship (as significant Ceremonies, to teach and stir up to spirituall Duties) or finally, for formes, and manner of worship, yet when we speak of helps and means of worship invented by Men, and forbidden by God, in this Commandement we doe not speak either of naturall or artificiall helps to help the natural sense in Gods worship; (such as Scaffolds be to mens hearing) nor of the helps of Tongues and Arts which the wisdome of God hath given for an help to the mind and understanding in all knowledge: As if God commanded the people to read in his Word all their dayes, and to read with understanding the Translation of Scripture into the Mother-Tongue of each Nation, is a necessary help to this end, & the knowledg of grammer, & tongues is a necessary help to such a translation.

And so if God command the people to joyne together, as well in voyce as in heart, to sing *Psalmes*, and to sing them with understanding; seeing *Psalmes* are a kind of holy Poetry, even

as Grammar will be a neceſſary help to tranſlate the *Pſalmes* into *Engliſh*; So Poetry will be requiſite to tranſlate the *Engliſh* into verſe; and ſuch kind of helps, though they be not expreſly commanded by God, yet we look at them as warranted by neceſſary conſequence from the Word; becauſe God, who commanded the duties of Reading the Scripture, and ſinging of *Pſalmes*, (and both to be done with underſtanding) he doth imply a neceſſary warrant of ſuch means as do naturally and neceſſarily lead to thoſe ends, and without which thoſe ends (without a miracle) cannot be obtained.

We ſpeak therefore of ſuch means and helps of worſhip forbidden in this Commandement, not which do naturally and neceſſarily help forward the ſame (though remotely) but of ſuch Arbitrary helps, as are voluntarily taken up by the wiſdome and will of man for ſpirituall ends, (as *Gideons* Ephod and *Phariſaicall* waſhings, and ſuperadded to thoſe means and helps of worſhip; which God hath ſufficiently, yea, and abundantly ſupplyed, his Church and people withall, by his Word and Spirit, for all ſpirituall duties.

Nevertheleſſe, this diſtinction of voluntary and neceſſary helps, may not be ſtretched ſo farre, as to juſtifie deviſed and ſet forms of Prayer, to ſupply the defects of ſinfully ignorant, or careleſſy baſhfull people, as cannot pray (eſpecially before company) without a book: For, firſt, God would not have ſuch perſons (ſo ſinfully ignorant and baſhfull) to be called

called forth into publique Miniſtry; the lame and the blind ſhall not come into *Sion*, into *Davids* Houſe, 2 *Sam.* 5. 8. nor may ſuch ignorant and lame Chriſtians be admitted to come into the publick place in the Church.

3. God hath provided other ſufficient helps to ſupply theſe defects to private Chriſtians: for beſides the Spirit of God (which helps all our infirmities, *Rom.* 8. 26.) who ſupplieth both the ignorant with knowledge of what, and how to pray, and the baſhfull with power; he hath alſo ordained inſtruction to help the ignorant, and frequent exerciſe, and diligent Catechiſing of a mans own family, to help his baſhfulneſſe in praying before them; and if ſtrangers come in, (and they fit to partake in ſuch an ordinance) God then offereth him the help of a Chriſtian friend to ſupply his neceſſity before ſtrangers; and when we ſpeak of form, and manner of worſhip deviſed by men; we ſpeak not of ſuch as light of nature and civill cuſtome taketh up for order and decency: but of ſuch as are taken up by the voluntary choice of the wiſdome and will of man, either for ſuch ends as God hath not appointed (as uniformity in Rites, and conformity to Idolaters) or for ſuch ends, as for which God hath provided otherwiſe; as the Love-feaſts in the Church to maintain brotherly love, for which God ordained the Lords Supper, and feaſts in private houſes: or contrary to ſuch ends and wayes as God hath appointed, as the *Chemarines* to offer incenſe, (a type of Prayer) to main-

tain a Praying Miniſtry, without ſacrificing; as a read Liturgie to maintain a reading or praying Miniſtry without preaching.

It was touched upon before that, when God forbad us ſuch a manner of worſhip, as Heathens uſe to their god, and againſt that one falſe manner of worſhip, eſtabliſheth his own inſtitutions in his Word (*Deut.* 12. 30, 31, 32.) He doth thereby evidently condemn under one falſe manner of worſhip all other forms or manners of worſhip, which are not inſtituted in his word. Hence conformity to Idolaters in cutting their hair and beards is forbidden, *Levit.* 19. 27. Hence preaching in the wiſdome of words, (or in carnall eloquence) is forbidden: as a painted Image againſt the ſecond Commandement, 1 *Cor.* 21. Hence Prayer towards the Eaſt falleth under the ſame reproof: Hence the incenſe of *Uzzia*, the ſtrange fire of *Nadab* and *Abihu*; the ſtriking of the rock by *Moſes* in the Wilderneſſe of *Sin*; the Love-Feaſts brought into the Lords Supper.

And many more ſuch like forms and manners of Gods worſhip are forbidden in the Word, as divers from the rule and pattern held forth in the ſecond Commandement, as it is opened and illuſtrated by theſe and ſuch like examples in the writings of the Prophets, and Apoſtles: we are not ignorant that there is alſo a ſinfull form and manner of worſhip which is forbidden in the third Commandement, as when we worſhip God unreverently, or drouſily, but that is rather *Ro. modus colendus*, then *modus cultus*.

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To apply then to this Rule and Commandement of God these set forms of Prayer devised by men, and prescribed to be read out of a Book, and so taken up by one Church from another, as the forms of their worship, and the helps of their devotion: We find no Commandement nor Pattern for them in the Word; nor any promise for their acceptance; They are injoyned for helps, and means of Gods worship; which God hath not sanctified, and for forms of worship, which God hath not acknowledged, and therefore we know not how to excuse them from sin, against the true meaning of the second Commandement.

Object. *If it be said that it was granted, before in stating the Question, that in reading a Prayer penned by another man (say one of* Calvins *Prayers after his Lectures) a man may be so affected with it, as that his heart going along therewith, he may convey his own desires, and Petitions to God in reading thereof, and so make it his own Prayer, though devised by another, and read out of a Book.*

Answ. We grant that a man may make use of another mans penned Prayers read in private, not only for an example, or instruction how to pray; but also occasionally for his present Prayer; If he find the Petitions sutable to his present occasions: Yea, we grant further, that in case one Church should send letters to another Church, and in the end thereof should conclude with some Prayer suitable to the state of the Church to whom they write: we doubt not but that the Church to whom the letters

are ſent, finding the Petitions ſuitable to their condition, may lawfully go along therewith in ſpirit, and in the end ſay *Amen* thereto, and ſo make it their own Prayer.

But yet here be two things different from the caſe in hand.

Firſt, They that penned ſuch Prayers did not preſcribe them as forms of Prayer for the brethren to uſe, left them freely to their liberty.

2. They that take them up occaſionally for their preſent uſe, and make them their Prayers, they do not ſet them apart to be read for their ordinary Prayers, either in publique or in private, which ſeemeth to us a matter of weighty conſideration, and maketh a great difference in the cauſe in hand to clear it by a familiar inſtance: A man paſſing through a burying place may ſee a dead mans ſcalp caſt up, and thereby take occaſion from the preſent object to meditate (for the preſent) on his mortality, and to prepare for like change: but if he ſhall take up, and keep that dead mans ſcalpe in his Cloſet, or Bed chamber, to be an ordinary help to him, to put him in mind daily of his mortality: Now in ſo doing he maketh an Image of it, to himſelf, by ſetting it a part to be an help to him in Gods worſhip; which not being ſanctified and ſet a part by God for that end, it now becomes a ſin to him againſt the ſecond Commandement in the former caſe, he took occaſion to fall into a preſent good meditation of mortality, by the preſent ſight of an object of morta liy,

as

as it was set before him occasionally by Gods providence, wherein he did well according to the second Commandement, not to passe by such a passage of Gods providence in vain: But in the latter case in setting it a part to be an ordinary help to him in such meditations, or injoyning the same to others; He in so doing maketh it to him and them an Image, it not being instituted, or sanctified by God, but devised and set apart by man, for such a spirituall end, which is forbidden in the second Commandement.

If it be said again, when I read Prayer and find some Petitions therein that sute well with my estate, I may not only then use them for my present Prayer, but may again and again ordinarily make use thereof in my own Prayers.

Answ. We deny not that, but it is one thing to take up a Petition, or two, or more, and to insert them here and there into mine own Prayers, and another thing to take up a whole intire prayer, or form of prayer, and use it ordinarily as mine own; see the like in Preaching, I may make use of a sentence or two, or more, here and there out of another mans Sermon, and it may be inculcate the same again and again, in many Sermons together of my own; But I may not therefore take up a whole Sermon penned by another, and preach it for mine own, though it were never so fit for my Text, and for mine own Congregation.

Whence alſo another reaſon (and in our apprehenſion of juſt weight) may be alledged againſt the ordinary uſe of ſet forms of Prayers deviſed by others. If every Miniſter be to edifie the Church by the diſpenſation of his own tallents, and gifts, as well in prayer as in preaching: Then he may not pray another mans penned prayer, no more then preach another mans penned Sermon, but the former is true, 1 *Cor.* 12. 7. *Acts* 6. 4 *Eph.* 4. 8. 11, 12, 13. therefore the latter.

3. Let me adde a third reaſon, If I may worſhip God in the *congregation* with a ſet form of prayer, read out of a book, then I may bring into the Church another book beſides the book of God, to be read ordinarily for the publique edification of the Church: But we know no warrant for the uſe of any book in the Church to be read ordinarily for the publique edification of the Church; beſides the book of God; to bring into the Church any other book beſides Gods, is like the bringing in of another *Altar* into the Temple of the Lord, and ſet it up beſides the *Altar* of the Lord: which did in time thruſt the *Altar* of the Lord to ſtand behind, and give place, and at length to be laid aſide, 2 *Kings* 16. 14, 15. I need not apply it, experience goeth far enough in applying of it; If it be an unſanctified way of preaching to fill a Sermon with *Quotations*, out of the Books of ancient Divines (whom more commonly then ſafely they call Fathers) though the ſentences be godly, and pithy, how much more will it be an unſanctified kind of prayer, to make up not only many Petitions together, but alſo a whole

whole form of Prayer out of a book, lesse ancient, and much more offensive.

4. Let me conclude with a fourth reason, and adde no more in this place, He that selecteth a few prayers which in themselves are free from offensive matter but of a book lyable (in the whole bulke) to many just exceptions, and withall imposed by one Church upon another, he doth really therein hold forth and professe his subjection (not only to the irregular exercise of that authority, whereby it is injoyned) but also to the whole order of worship injoyned in that book; as *Paul* in practising (though but seldome) a few ceremonies out of the book of the Law, did therein hold forth and professe his orderly walking according to the whole Law, and his professed subjecti on to the whole order of worship prescribed by the authority of the Law, *Acts* 21.24.25. which had it not been warranted by God himself for a season, he had doubtless thereby sinned against the second Commandement. Since then the second Commandement is so many wayes violated by reading of a Prayer-book, devised and prescribed by humane authority, for the publique Prayers of the Church, the Lord pardon all our provocations of his jealousie by our former ignorance in this point, & keep us blamelesse for after times, for his holy names sake, in Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

You know the sinnes against this Commandement, do more provoke the jealousie of the Lord against his people, and that for many generations, then the breach of any of the rest, which is the reason why the Lord setteth before

fore his people (as a flaming ſword) his jealouſie, for a ſanction and fence of this Commandement above the reſt, *Exod.* 20. 5. And ſhall we then provoke the Lord to jealouſie, are we ſtronger than he? but let us proceed with our Diſcourſe.

Diſc. *They tell us* (ſay you) *God hath not ordained a ſet preſcript worſhip, he hath not indeed preſcribed it as neceſſary, but his Word doth warrant it to us as lawfull.*

Anſw. Firſt, ſhew us, but one Text of the word that doth warrant it as lawfull, any word of precept or promiſe, or pattern from the Scripture, and we ſhall do as you offer to do, ſit down in ſilence.

Secondly, if God hath not preſcribed a ſet form as neceſſary, why is ſuch neceſſity put upon all the Churches, for receiving of it, hath the Church power to bind where God looſeth?

Diſc. *Touching the externall form of words, in which we ſhould profer our Petitions, we know nothing preciſely commanded by the Lord, and therefore judge it a thing meerly indifferent whether our requeſts be read or uttered; whether in a ſtinted or conceived form of words; neither do we bring in any ſtrange manner of Prayer; for in ſubſtance the prayer read and conceived is all one.*

Anſw. Firſt, touching the externall form of words in prayer, we may know (and muſt willingly know what the word hath taught us) that the Lord hath commanded (whether expreſſely or by juſt conſequence, all is one): Firſt, that as in Preaching, ſo conſequently in

in Prayer, we are to expreſſe our minds in ſuch a frame of words, not which mans wiſdome teacheth, but which the *Holy Ghoſt* teacheth, 1 *Cor.* 2. 13.

Secondly, that we are not to worſhip God after the precepts, or patterns of men, but do all things after the pattern in the mount, *Eſay* 29. 13. *Deut.* 12. 30, 31, 32. *Heb.* 8. 5.

Thirdly, tha t we ſhould not worſhip God in an Image, deviſed by man, and ſuch are all ſet forms of Prayer, deviſed helps of worſhip, and preſcribed to be read in the Church of Chriſt.

Anſw. 2. But ſuppoſe (as the *Diſcourſe* preſumeth) that it were a thing meerly indifferent, whether our requeſts be read, or uttered, whether in a ſtinted or conceived form of words, It ſeemeth to us a manifeſt tranſgreſſion of the bounds, both of Apoſtolicall authority, and Chriſtian liberty, to bring in or take up a form of Prayer ſtinted and limitted by men, which is left to us indifferent by God; nor can we excuſe a read prayer preſcribed by men, from a ſtrange form of prayer; ſeeing no ſuch form is read or heard of, in all the Scripture; ſo great a difference is there betwixt a conceived, and a preſcribed read prayer, as is betwixt the fire from the Altar and the ſtrange fire; the one is an ordinance of God, the other is an imagination of men.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Wherein Anſwer is returned to Reaſon the ſecond.

IF *it be lawfull to uſe a preſcript form of bleſſing, prayer thanks-giving, and baptiſing ſet down in the Word of God, Then all preſcript forms of Prayer or Liturgy, are not to be condemned; but the former appeareth from* Numb. 6. 22, 23. Pſal. 102. 1. Hoſ. 14. 2, 3. Joel 2. 17. Deut. 5. 10. Pſal. 92. 1. Ezra. 3. 10. Rev. 15. 3. 2 Chron. 29. 30. Iſa. 12. 1. Math. 28. 19. *What anſwer do our Brethren return to this Argument?*

Anſw. Our anſwer is ready, and plain, juſt and ſhort, we deny both the Major Propoſition, and the ground of the Minor; for (to ſpeak firſt to the former) it doth not follow that preſcript form of prayer invented by men is lawfull, becauſe a form preſcribed of God is good and allowable; the Reaſon whereof is found and evident; though God forbid men to make themſelves any Image, or likeneſſe in his worſhip, yet he hath not forbidden himſelfe this power to preſcribe any Image or form to us; he appointed his people to make the Cherubims to worſhip him before them, both in the Tabernacle and Temple; but yet when *Jeroboam* made to himſelf the like form at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and

and preſcribed them to the people, it was a manifeſt breach of the ſecond Commandement; what reply doth the Diſcourſer return to this?

Diſc. *A meer ſhift (*ſay you*) inſtead of an anſwer: for the queſtion is not of this or that form in particular, but of a preſcript form in it ſelfe conſidered; the Lords Prayer was indited, or preſcribed by our Saviour himſelf, and they yet deny the uſe thereof as a prayer, and moſt of the Reaſons which they bring, do conclude againſt every ſet form of prayer, as well as againſt any one; thus they argue: If a ſet form of Prayer be lawfull, then a man may carry his prayers in his poeket; buy them at the Book-binders ſhops, &c. and doth not this Reaſon diſallow all penned and printed formes as well as ours?*

Anſw. Thus, with one ſudden and blunt daſh of a Pen, a holy and divine truth confirmed by plentifull evidence of Scripture, and applyed generally and frequently by our beſt Divines againſt Popiſh Images, is at once blotted out, and branded as a ſhift: I ſay no more but this: This is a ſpeaking evill of the Law; and condemning of the Law, and that in a higher degree than that which is reproved by the Apoſtle *James*, *Chap.* 4. 11. for the Law it ſelf in condemning Images, and the imaginations of mens deviſing, commandeth and eſtabliſheth the Images and imaginations ordained by God.

Therefore for you to call ſuch a diſtinction of Images, as is eſtabliſhed by the Law of God,

a meer ſhift, is to make your ſelf (pardon my plainneſſe) in this caſe, not an obſerver of the Law, but a Judge; ſo farre will inordinate zeale to a way of error tranſport even godly minds.

But to ſpeak to the grounds of ſuch a cenſure, though it were granted that the queſtion is not of this or that form of Prayer in particular, yet is of a ſet form deviſed by men, and preſcribed to be read out of a book for an ordinary Prayer; yea, I might adde further, that the occaſion of the Queſtion in hand, ſpringeth from an offence taken at ſome brethren (as ſappeareth by the letters ſent to us about this matter, by ſundry Reverend godly brethren, and ſubſcribed amongſt others, by your own name) for their not joyning with others to worſhip God in a common ſtinted Liturgy, known to be deviſed by men, and preſcribed to be read for the publique Prayers of all the Churches in the Countrey; howſoever therefore the queſtion be reduced by your Diſcourſes *ab Hypotheſi, ad Theſin* (& by lawfull rules of diſpute ſo may be) yet it is againſt the rule Μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἄλλο γένος, ſo to palliate the matter, as to draw the queſtion above the kind, and occaſion of the queſtion, you may upon occaſion of one preſcript form of Prayer deviſed by men, put the queſtion of any preſcript form of Prayer deviſed by men; but it is an utter changing and forſaking of the cauſe to put off the queſtion in hand to forms of Prayer deviſed and preſcribed by God; what though ſome that have ſpoken

or written in this cauſe, have waved ſome forms of Prayer deviſed by God himſelf; and have uſed ſome arguments, that graſp at more than they can hold?

The ſtate of the queſtion muſt not be drawn to the arguments, but the arguments to the ſtate of the queſtion; It is true, ſome have doubted, and ſome have denyed the uſe of the Lords Prayer (as it is called) for a Prayer, but they would never have denyed it or doubted of it, if they had thought it had been preſcribed by Chriſt for a Prayer: But howſoever (not to ſpend words and time in vain) we for our parts (I ſpeak for the moſt part) do grant it may be lawfull to pray thut very Prayer, in the ſame words, and yet this will not at all prejudice the cauſe in hand, to juſtifie Prayers in a Book compoſed by men, and impoſed by one Church upon another.

Nevertheleſſe, that Argument againſt ſuch Prayers which are fetched from the Topicks of the Pocket, or of the Book-binders Shops, we neither uſe, nor allow, they which uſe them may clear their own intentions and drift in them.

Having thus cleared the denyall of the Major Propoſition, we do as juſtly deny the ground of the Minor, for though it do appear from Scripture, that ſome forms of Prayer, or bleſſing, or baptizing, or thankſgiving deviſed by God, were ſometimes uſed by godly men (and it was lawfull for them ſo to do) yet we deny (that which was the ground of the Minor) that

that God in his Word did ſet down any preſcript form of any of theſe: Preſcript (I ſay) In ſuch a ſence as in this Queſtion is intended; to wit, preciſely injoyning the uſe thereof in all their publique holy Aſſemblies: nor will any of the Scriptures alledged reach that; in *Numb.* 6. 22, 23. The *Prieſts* are directed to a form of bleſſing: But that they uſed that and not other forms, doth not appear: It is evident that the Apoſtles uſed divers other forms, as hath been ſhewed above, in *Pſal.* 22. 1. there is no preſcribing of a form of words at all, only Chriſt uſed the ſame words, with a little variance upon the like occaſion, on the Croſſe, or if you urge the title of the *Pſalms*, from *Junius* his notes, as if the *Pſalm* were appointed to be ſung every morning by break of day: Bear with us if we rather fetch the meaning of theſe words חשחר צל אילת from the *Pſalm* it ſelf, *verſ.* 19. where the Prophet alluding to אילת calleth the Lord אילותי my ſtrength haſten to help me, the words therefore in the title hold forth no more but the Argument of the *Pſalm* צל אילתה שחר for ſpeedy help a *Pſalm* of *David*, In *Pſalm* 102. 1. the Title ſheweth what an afflicted ſoul in ſuch a caſe did pray; but doth not preſcribe all afflicted ſoules to powre out the ſame form of words in their afflictions. *Hoſea* 14. 2,3. The Prophet directeth them to take words to themſelves, to ſuch a purpoſe: But whether the ſelf ſame words, or ſome other ſuch like, he doth not limit or preſcribe: The like may be ſaid of *Joel.* 1. 17.

1. 17. *Deut.* 5. 10. hath nothing ſounding towards the point in hand. I ſuppoſe it is miſwritten by the errour of the Scribe. In *Pſal.* 92. 1. the Pſalm is penned for the Sabbath, but whether for a word of inſtruction for the Sabbath, or for thankſgiving on the Sabbath it is not mentioned, we willingly grant it was penned for both; But nevertheleſſe, it was not preſcribed every Sabbath day to be ſung. In *Ezra* 3. 10. it doth appear, as alſo 2 *Chron.* 29. 30. That they praiſed God with the words of *David* and after his Ordinance: But his Ordinance and words were appointed by God, 2 *Chron.* 29. 25. And yet not ſo preſcribed to be uſed as never to be omitted; In *Rev.* 15. 3. when it is ſaid, they ſung the Song of *Moſes* the ſervant of God, and the Song of the Lamb; It is only meant, they praiſed God with Pſalms to the like effect as that of *Moſes*; not with the ſame words, much leſſe upon preſcript. *Iſa.* 12. 1. It is propheſied the Church ſhall praiſe God to ſuch a purpoſe as theſe words hold forth: But whether in theſe very words, is uncertain, certain it is, they are not ſo preſcribed to do; but left at liberty. In *Matth.* 29. 19. the place is miſwritten, as before.

Diſc. *But it ſufficeth us that theſe forms of Bleſſing and Prayer, might lawfully be uſed as a bleſſing, or Prayer, though in conſcience they were not neceſſarily tyed to the uſe of them: The lawfull, not the neceſſary uſe of a preſcript form of prayer (or liberty) is now in queſtion: for if the Saints in former times might pray unto God, or praiſe him in a ſtinted*

form of words, indited by others, or invented by themſelves (as we find they might and did) we alſo at this day do the ſame.

Anſw. We deny not that forms of Prayer and bleſſings indited by the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, may be lawfully ſo uſed, but we deny that they were preſcribed, or limited to be ſo uſed, but ſtill the Church left at liberty to uſe them, or ſome other holy forms in their ſtead; and therefore when the Diſcourſe ſaith the lawfull, not the neceſſary uſe of a preſcript form, is now in queſtion, you make the queſtion to imply a contradiction: for a preſcript form is put upon the Churches, as neceſſary to be uſed in all publique holy aſſemblies, elſe it is not a form preſcribed, but deſcribed only.

Diſc. *But* (ſaith the Diſcourſer) *if they will hear with patience, the conſequence of that argument, The uſe of a deviſed, and preſcribed form of prayer will be juſtified from their own ground; for they teach that God hath not appointed in his Word any preſcript form, which of neceſſity we are tyed to uſe at all; that the matter of our prayers are divers, according to the ſeverall occaſions, which happen and fall out; that the Inward frame is the elevation of the ſoul to God, in humility, love, fear and confidence; from which premiſes it will neceſſarily follow, if one godly forme of prayer may be uſed, another alſo fit for matter, grave for phraſe of ſpeech, may be allowed, for none is abſolutely commanded.*

Anſw. The contrary concluſion doth rather follow from the premiſes; for if none be abſolutely commanded by God, then none ought to be

be commanded or prescribed by men; what God hath left free in his worship, let no man limit; To what Church did God ever give power to bind where himself looseth? And if it be unlawfull for Church Governours to bind where God looseth, it will be unlawfull for the people so deeply to offend the conscience of their Governours, as to build them up, or to harden them in their sins, by ready subjection to such injunctions, and serious and zealous pleading for them: How much safer were it for the people of God, to stand fast in the liberty which Christ hath purchased for them, in accepting no other yoke of ordinances, nor forms of worship, then himself hath put upon them? that so Church Governours might contain themselves within the power in Church affairs, wherein the Lord hath contained himselfe throughout the Scriptures; when shall it once be that the servants of God will learn to be wise, and teach others to be wise, not above that which is written, but according to it, that so an end might be put at length to the inventions and innovations of the sons of men, whereby they take upon themselves an usurpation beyond the bounds of Apostolicall Authority, and put upon the people an unjust restraint of the bounds of their dear bought Christian liberty?

Disc. *The use of a prescript form of prayer (or Liturgy) derogateth* (as some say) *from the honour, fruit and benefit of Christs ascention; who ascending up on high, hath given gifts to men for the*

work of the Miniſtry, Eph. 4. 8. *Let it be granted that every particular Miniſter is able in ſo full and ample manner at all times to open his heart before God (which can never be proved) as that he ſhall not need the help of a book: Is there no warrant therefore for others to preſcribe, or for themſelves to read or uſe ſtinted prayer; why not? an able Miniſter hath diſcretion to know what portion of Scripture is fit to be read; Hath the Church then no power to appoint what Books and Chapters ſhall ordinarily be read; or hath a Miniſter no warrant to obſerve that appointment? A learned Linguiſt is able to tranſlate a Chapter in the old or new Teſtament, peradventure as well as it is tranſlated, may not the Church yet ordain one uſually to be read?*

Let our brethren judge the ſtrength of their Reaſon, in one framed after the ſame manner; If a Miniſter be indued with gifts to judge what portion of Scripture is meet to be read, then is there no warrant for another to preſcribe, nor for them to read ſtinted portions of Scripture preſcribed by men; prayer is a part of Gods worſhip, ſo is reading of Scripture; the externall form of words are humane, ſo is the preſcription of ſuch a Book or Chapter.

Anſw. The Reaſon is of more weight againſt preſcript forms, then will ſo eaſily be caſt off, at leaſt to our beſt apprehenſions; For if the Lord Jeſus by his aſcention hath given ſufficient furniture of gifts to the Miniſters of his Church for prayer, as well as for preaching; For the whole work of the Miniſtry, for the edification

of

of the Church, For the perfecting of the Saints unto the fulneſſe of the ſtature of the age of Chriſt ; Then it is diſhonourable unto Chriſt, and ſuperfluous for the Governours of the Church, to preſcribe unto Miniſters ſet forms of Prayer in Liturgies, any more than ſet forms of preaching in Homilies ; If Chriſt hath not gifted them as ſufficient for the one as for the other, it doth indeed derogate from the honour and fruit of his aſcention ; if he have, then it is ſuperfluous for Church governours, *Aſſum Agere*, even as much as to tie bladders under the wings of Sea-fowls to keep them from ſinking, or to help them to ſwim ; It is true that every good Miniſter is not able at all times to open his heart to God in Prayer, but neither is he able at all times to open the mind of God in preaching, but if he be not able to do both without book, neither will he be able to do either upon a book preſcribed to him ; I have known a Miniſter to edifie the people more by ſilence in the Pulpit through ſtrength of temptation, then ever I knew any do by reading a Homily upon the Book.

If an able Miniſter have diſcretion to know what portion of Scripture is fit to be read, to what end ſhould the Church appoint him what Books and Chapter to read ordinarily ; It is a commendable work in any ſtate to procure a faithfull tranſlation of the Bible to be extant in the mother tongue of each people under their dominions, for the common benefit of them all. And we do eaſily grant a Miniſter (though he

be a learned Linguiſt) hath liberty not onely to make uſe of it in his private ſtudies, but alſo to make uſe of it in the Congregation; for ſeeing reading of Scripture is an ordinance of God; yea, and reading of it in the mother tongue of each people, it will beſt agree with the edification of each people, to read it out of ſuch a book as is frequent and currant in all their hands.

But yet the Church may not ſo bind him to ſuch a tranſlation, as not to give him leave to amend it, if need be; and he be able: And beſides, this will no way reach the binding of Miniſters to a ſet form of Prayer upon a book: ſeeing reading of Prayers in the Church, as Prayers, is not any ordinance of God; as all the reading of tranſlated Scriptures be.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Anſwering to the third Reaſon.

Diſc. *IF it be lawfull to ſing Pſalmes in a form of words deviſed by men, then likewiſe to pray unto God in a ſtinted forme; If the one of theſe be an invention of men a ſtrange prayer; a ſimilitude of a prayer: ſo is the other a ſimilitude of a Pſalm.*

Anſw. Firſt, the ſinging of Pſalms (whereof you ſpeak) in a form of words deviſed by men, may have a double meaning: for either you mean ſuch Pſalms as are compiled by ordinary men, or elſe Pſalms penned by the Prophets; but tranſlated by ordinary men into Engliſh verſe, to be ſung in the Churches; If you ſpeak of the former, then this is our firſt anſwer:

1. We ſee as little warrant for ſinging *Apocrypha* Pſalms in the Church, as for praying preſcript *Lyturgies* of men in the Church: and for both together, as little warrant as for reading *Apocrypha* Scriptures in the Church; but if you ſpeak of the latter, then our ſecond anſwer is this.

2. There is an obſervable difference between ſinging of Pſalms and Prayer; as alſo, between the Pſalms penned by the Prophets, and by other ordinary men; for in the peoples joyn-

ing in prayer, there is no more required but their going along in ſilence, with conſent of the heart, and in the end of the prayer, expreſſing their conſent in voyce, by ſaying, *Amen*, 1 *Corinth.* 14. 16. But in ſinging of Pſalms, all the people of God (as ſpiritual Prieſts) do ſing with voyce together, according to *Iſa.* 52. 8. which putteth a neceſſity upon a ſet form of Pſalms, elſe one ſhould ſing one thing, and another another thing, which would inſtead of harmony, breed confuſion; but there is no neceſſity of a ſet form of Prayer; for if the words of the Miniſters prayers be underſtood of the people, they go along & joyn with him in ſilent conſent, as well in a form conceived for the preſent occaſion; as in a ſet form of words, whereunto they have been accuſtomed: beſides the Pſalms penned by the Prophets (as by *David* and the reſt) being of divine inſpiration, and part of the holy word of God (which we are commanded ſhould dwell in us plenteouſly, and wherewith we are to teach and admoniſh our ſelves and one another, by the ſinging of them unto the Lord) we have therefore a lawfull warrant, to ſing ſuch Pſalms; even in ſuch a form of words, as they are tranſlated into by men; when yet we have not the like warrant to pray the forms of Prayer deviſed by ordinary men, which are not of divine inſpiration, but of humane invention and injunction. Pſalms and Scripture tranſlated are ſtill as truly the Word of God in the tranſlation, as in the originall language.

Diſc.

Diſc. *But* (ſay you) *If a man be diſpoſed to reaſon againſt the ſinging of Pſalms, he may a great deal more plauſibly argue that the infancy of the Church when God ſaw a ſet form to be neceſſary; he inſpired holy men to pen ſuch as might be of uſe for that time, when ſuch worſhip was approved; and therefore ſeeing at this day, no ſuch forms are given us of God, they are not to be allowed.*

Anſw. Such an argument though you think it were plauſible, yet indeed it is leſſe defenceable; for the truth is, ſet forms of Pſalms are as neceſſary now, as they were then; for ſeeing it is neceſſary that all the people ſhould joyn in voyce as well as in heart, in the ſinging of Pſalms. It is therefore neceſſary they ſhould know before-hand the ſame ſet form of words in which they ſhould all joyn; and ſeeing a ſet form of words in Pſalms is neceſſary, it pleaſed the Lord to deviſe himſelf to our hands a ſet form of them by his holy Prophets; who being carried by the Holy Ghoſt, farre above humane infirmity and poſſibility of erring; they have ſet down ſuch forms as were fit not only for the infancy of the Church, but for the publique uſe of all Churches in all ages, and for all occaſions, which cannot be ſaid of any compilements de viſed by ordinary men.

Diſc. *But* (ſay you) *a ſet form of words is as neceſſary in preaching, and publique prayers, as in ſinging; this or that form is neceſſary in neither; a ſet form is neceſſary in both: the people cannot ſing with the Miniſter, unleſſe what is ſung be repreſented to them in a ſet form of words; nor can they joyn in prayer, or attend to the word preached, unleſſe*

leſſe the matter of praying or preaching be conveyed to them in a ſet form of words.

Anſw. You confound a form of words underſtood and a ſet form: it is true, no man can joyn in prayer, or attend unto the Word preached, unleſſe the matter of prayer or preaching be conveyed in a form of words underſtood: but yet without a ſet form of words they may, the words being delivered in a known tongue; By ſet forms we underſtand ſtanding forms, ſuch as come to be uſed again and again, day by day in the ſame words; common ſence maketh it evident, men may joyn in prayer, and attend to the Word preached, as well in a new form of words, according to the preſent occaſion, which he never heard before, as in a ſet form which he heareth every day.

Diſc. *But you demand, Is a Miniſter able to expreſſe the neceſſities of the people, or the doctrine of ſalvation in a form of words deviſed and ſtudied by himſelfe? and is he not able by meditation and ſtudy, to dictate, and compoſe a Pſalm to be ſung by the people, as occaſion requireth? and if ſo, is not a ſtinted form of ſinging deviſed by men, an arbitrary help to him, and ſo forbidden.*

Anſw. 2. Many a good Miniſter that is able to expreſſe the neceſſities of the people, or the doctrine of ſalvation, in a form of words deviſed and ſtudied by himſelf: is not able ſo to dictate and compoſe a Pſalm to be ſung by the people each ſeveral occaſion, no, though he ſhould meditate and ſtudy hard for it: Poetry is not every good Scholars faculty; nor the penning

penning of holy Psalms the skill of every good Minister: nor is it required that it should. For seeing the Holy Ghost hath already dictated and composed to our hands divers forms of Psalms for all occasions, it would be superfluous for Ministers to take up their meditations and studies, about the inventing other forms, though they had gifts fit for it: and therefore if such as have the skill to pen Psalms, do nevertheless sing the forms of Psalms set and composed by *David*, and other Prophets: as they cannot be said, therein to make use of the inventions of men, but of Gods institutions; so neither can they be said to sin upon the other respect, which you mention, because they use an help to them not necessary; whereas others that want their skill, do lawfully use *Davids* Psalms, because such an help to them, is not arbitrary, but necessary: no, no, we do not approve of that distinction between arbitrary and necessary, in that sense, to that purpose; in that sense I say, for I here see you work upon an equivocation in this word necessary; For there is a double necessity spoken of in this case: a set form of worship may be said to be necessary, either through sinfull defects in men, who should be able, but are not, to conceive a form of worship of themselves, or else through the nature and condition of the worship it selfe, which cannot be performed, but in a set form, whatsoever the gifts of men be; in this latter sense, not in the former, is the singing of Psalms in a set form necessary; for unless a Psalm be expressed in a set form of words, and so set before

fore the people, all the people cannot joyn in voyce (as well as heart) singing and praising God together in the same words; we admit of no necessity of any set forms of prayer (or other worship) in the former sense: as concerning such men unfit to be Ministers of the Gospel as want gifts to conceive a prayer according to the present occasion; but a set form of Psalms we allow as necessary in the latter sense, as necessary (by consequence) from divine institution; for if singing of Psalms be as it is of divine institution: and if Psalms be a kind of spiritual Poetry, and therefore to be put into verse; If it be also of divine institution; that all the people should joyn as well in voyce, as in heart, in singing of Psalms; and that in a language known, and understood by themselves; then it will be requisite and necessary by divine institutions (for he that instituteth the end, instituteth the necessary means that leadeth to the end) that in our *English* Churches the Psalms be translated into *English* verse, or metre; and received of the Churches in a set form; that so all the people may joyn with one voyce and heart to praise the Lord together in the same words, but there is not the like necessity of a set form of words in prayer: For in prayer (as hath been said) there is no more required of the people then when they hear the words of the Minister, to go along with him in heart; and in the end of the prayer to answer with one accord in voyce, *Amen.* And so whatsoever is required of the people by divine institution for joyning

joyning in prayer is fully attained, without a ſet form of words in prayer, which cannot be attained in ſinging without a ſet form of words in Pſalms.

Diſc. *It is ſaid of prayer, Chriſt hath given gifts to his Miniſters for preaching and praying, hath he not for the ſinging of Pſalms alſo? If it be a diſhonour to Chriſt (as ſome affirme) that they ſhould uſe a form of prayer deviſed by others; Is it not a diſhonour likewiſe, if they ſhall uſe a form of ſinging deviſed by others?*

Anſw. It hath been anſwered above, that though God hath given gifts to his Miniſters for preaching and praying; yet he hath not given to many the gift of inditing Pſalms alſo; and yet neither is it any diſhonour to Chriſt, nor ſinfull defect in his Miniſters that he hath not ſo furniſhed them, ſeeing he himſelf hath ſufficiently furniſhed them with all ſet forms of Pſalms by the Miniſtry of his Prophets, divinely inſpired for the ſervice of the Church: and it is no diſhonour to Chriſt or his Miniſters that they ſhould take up forms of words deviſed by him for his own worſhip.

Diſc. *If there be any ſuch neceſſity (of a ſet form of Pſalmes) as is pretended, becauſe ſome Miniſters are not enabled of themſelves to furniſh the neceſſities of the Church: It ſhould rather exempt them from the practiſe of ſinging Pſalms, then give liberty to a deviſed form; for it is a rule in divinity, that againſt a general negative precept no particular affirmative can be lawfull, unleſſe that particular be warranted in Scripture, &c. But againſt this ſup-*

poſed

posed generall negative precept, forbidding all devised helps, and furtherances in Gods worship, there is no particular warrant alowing it in singing of Psalmes.

Answ. It is not a supposed, but a reall negative precept that generally forbiddeth all devised helps and furtherances in Gods worship, meaning helps and furtherances devised by men without warrant from the word: For this is indeed the proper true meaning of the second Commandement, as hath been shewed above: but we deny that set forms of Psalms recorded in Scripture as helps and furtherances devised by men, but given by the Holy Ghost; and though the translation of the Psalms both in *English* and in verse, be by men, yet not without warrant from the Holy Ghost, who hath commanded that the Word of God should dwell in us plenteously, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymnes, and spirituall Songs, *Coloss.* 3. 16. who hath also commanded that we should sing with understanding, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. which the people could not do to their own understanding, or the understanding of their brethren, if the Psalms were not translated into their own mother tongue; and when the translation doth fitly expresse the sense of the originall Psalms; we have warrant also to make use of the translation, though compiled by ordinary men, as we see the Apostles did many times make use of the translation of the *Septuagints*, provided the translation be not imposed upon us, as that was not upon them;

and that liberty be still left to correct or reform whatsoever shall be found in the translation to swerve from the true meaning and just weight of the originall Scripture; besides, it hath been shewed above, (in opening the meaning of the second Commandement) that though the negative precept forbid all helps and means of Gods worship devised by men without warrant from the word: yet not the help of Tongues and Art, which not the wit and will of man, but the wisdom of God hath provided as necessary helps for the furtherance of sundry parts of Gods worship.

The Scriptures cannot be translated into our Mother Tongue, without the help of Grammer, nor the Psalms into verse and metre without the help of Poetry, nor sung without the help of Musick (naturall Musick at the least) and therefore these kinds of helps we make use of, as not being means of worship devised, or suggested by the wit or will of man, but as they are indeed prepared and ordained (according to the light of nature) by God: And so not falling under the generall negative precept which forbiddeth all humane Inventions, and Injunctions in the worship of God.

Disc. *Now whether the pretended necessity of a set form, should exempt from the generall negative precept, forbidding devised formes, or from the affirmative precept of singing Psalmes let them judge who put the Exception.*

Answ. We doubt not to judge it safe to obey the affirmative precept of singing Psalms, in a

set

ſet form of words though tranſlated into Engliſh, and into verſe by men, becauſe ſet Pſalms are ordained of God, and their tranſlation into Engliſh verſe is neceſſarily implyed and warranted by God himſelf: And yet nevertheleſſe we do not pretend any neceſſity to exempt any ſuch ſet form from the generall negative precept which falleth under the prohibition of it; for theſe the negative precept did never intend to prohibit: *You need not therefore to wonder* (as you do in the following words) *why ſuch a neceſſity* (as hath been opened) *of a ſet deviſed form of ſinging ſhould excuſe a ſet form of Pſalms, and yet not excuſe a ſet form of prayer, but rather excuſe the people from joyning in it.*

Anſw. Becauſe there is no neceſſity at all of a deviſed ſet form of prayer unleſs it be through the ſinfull defect of the Miniſters gifts in Prayer, which is ſuch a neceſſity, as God abhorreth both it and the Miniſter for it; But the neceſſity of a set form of Pſalms is ſuch which God himſelf hath put, for the Celebration of that ſervice with one accord, both in heart and voyce, as hath been ſhewed, and therefore you might well have forborn that confident expreſſion.

Diſc. *If Chriſtians ſhall not exempt themſelves from the ſtinted Prayers uſed in the Congregation, untill a materiall difference be ſhewed in theſe particulars, and that diſtinction of Arbitrary, and neceſſary, deviſed forms be approved by ſolid Reaſons and holy Scriptures, the world ſhall end* (I am confident) *before they ſhall ſeparate.*

For

For you see a materiall difference in these particulars, between the necessity of a set form of Psalms, and the necessity of a set forme of Prayer. The necessity of the one is from Gods Ordinance, and therefore warrantable: The necessity of the other is from mans Ignorance, and such ignorance as maketh him unfit for the Ministeriall Office, and therefore sinfull.

As for the distinction of Arbitrary and necessary devised forms in your sence, we neither use it nor approve it: And therefore have no cause to bring either holy Scriptures or solid Reasons for the proof of it: But in that sence wherein we use it, the distinction is so man ifest from what we have said already, that we think your self will require no further proof of it.

CHAP. V.

Answering to the fourth Reason.

Disc. *YOur fourth Reason may be thus contracted, If the Spirit of God do work by means, and if he stir up good desires, yet giveth not ability to expresse our desires, in fit and significant words: Then it is lawfull for us to use all godly means to stir up the graces of God in us: and to premeditate how to utter our Requests, in such a form and manner, as may best serve for our quickning, and the edification of others; and if the use of a premeditated form of*

words in prayer do not ſtint the Spirit; a ſet form of Prayer cannot be injurious to the Spirit, grant the one, the other will follow.

Anſw. If the ſpeech be of publique prayer, the ſame ſpirit that giveth the Miniſter ability to deliver a Sermon, in fit and ſignificant tearms, doth in like ſort give ability to expreſſe his deſires in Prayer, in fit and ſignificant tearms: no man is called of God to be a Miniſter of his Church, but he is as well apt to Pray as apt to Preach; But if the ſpeech be of private perſons, it is true, many good ſouls have better deſires than utterance; In regard of which defect or without ſuch defect we willingly condeſcend to you: It is lawfull, yea, and neceſſary to him, to uſe all godly means to ſtir up the graces of God in him, and to premeditate how to utter his requeſts in ſuch ſort as beſt ſerves for his own quickning, & the edification of others: But this we deny, that the uſing of a preſcript form of Prayer upon a book, deviſed and impoſed by one man upon another to be uſed as their Prayer, is a godly means to ſtir up the graces of God in himſelfe, or to edifie others; For that which the Holy Ghoſt hath not ſanctified in his Word for the ſtirring up of the graces of God in a mans ſelf or others, that is not a godly means for ſuch an end; But throughout the Scriptures we cannot find any where, that the Holy Ghoſt hath ſanctified ſuch a means to ſuch an end: And then it is but an Image, which will rather teach a form of godlineſſe, than edifie to the power of it.

Diſc.

Disc. *Peradventure they would creep out by saying the Spirit of God is our only helper in the time of Prayer, so that though at other times we might use helps to stir up the graces of the Spirit, yet not in time of prayer: But this distinction is not found in Scripture, neither can be deduced by any sound reason from thence. The Spirit of God is at all times the sole mover, and enabler of us to pray, and the use of lawfull means, and such as sute with the nature of prayer, are at no time unlawfull, as it is fit we meditate and read before we pray, so it is lawfull in prayer to kneel and lift up our hands and eyes, to use the help of the voyce, and the benefit of a Christian friend to stir up affection. Therefore we may dispute for the lawfullnesse of book Prayer, thus, if it be lawfull to use externall helps in time of prayer, the better to stir up affections, then book prayer is not to be condemned.*

Answ. To creep out, being a borrowed speech from worms; It being put upon us holdeth us forth as worms, and not as men, yea, worse than worms, (Serpents, rather than Worms:) That being compassed in with truth, are willing to creep out by any evasion, rather than to submit to the authority of the truth: But let our reverend and godly brother, be intreated, not to deal such measures to his Brethren: Least the God and Father of us both, be displeased and stir up others to returne like measure to you, heaped up, pressed down, shaken together: our plain and simple Answer (without creeping or shifting) Is this, that it is lawfll to use any externall or internall helps,

either before Prayer, to prepare us for it, or in Prayer to quicken, or inlarge us in it, provided, they be ſuch means and helps as God hath ſanctified to ſuch an end, at ſuch a time.

As we readily grant the help of books and meditation, before Prayer, ſo we do grant alſo the help of holy and reverent geſtures in Prayer, as bowing down the knees, and lifting up of the hands, and eyes, and voyce, the preſence and aſſiſtance of a Chriſtian friend, for all theſe God hath ſanctified, to help the inward affections of the heart in prayer, do but ſhew that God hath ſanctified Book-prayers, impoſed upon us for our prayers, and that by the members of other Congregations, and we will neither creep nor ſtart away: But willingly bleſſe the Lord for his goodneſſe to you in this caſe, (as well as in many others) like as *Phineas* and the Congregation of *Iſrael* bleſſed God; for the *Rubenites* and *Gadites* that were able to give ſo good an account of their actions, beyond the expectation of their brethren, *Joſ.* 22.

Diſc. *In prayer penned by a godly and well experienced Chriſtian, the caſe of a diſtreſſed ſoul may more pithily and amply be deciphered and anatomized then he of himſelfe is able to do it; and in ſuch a caſe to deny him this lawfull help, is to take away the Crutch from the lame, and bread from the hungry.*

Anſw. In caſe a diſtreſſed ſoul do meet with a prayer penned, by a godly and well experienced Chriſtian, and do find his own caſe, pithily

thily and amply deciphered and anatomized therein, we deny not but his heart and affections may go along with it, and ſay *Amen* to it: And thus far may find it a lawfull help to him; but if you ſet a part ſuch a prayer to ſupport him as a crutch in his prayers (as without which he cannot walk ſtraight and upright in that duty) or if he that penned that prayer, or others that have read it, do injoyn it upon him, and forbid him to pray (eſpecially with others) unleſſe he uſe that form, this inſtead of a crutch, will prove a cudgell to break the bones of the Spirit in prayer, and force him to halt in worſhipping God after the precepts of men; as it hath been ſaid before, ſo it may be again remembred here; a man may help his ſpirit in meditation of his mortallity, by beholding a dead mans ſcalp, caſt in his way by Gods providence; but if he ſhould ſet a part a deaths head, or take it up as injoyned to him by others, never to meditate or conferre with others about his mortality, and eſtate of another life, but in the ſight and uſe of the deaths head, ſuch a ſoul ſhall find but a dead heart, and a dead devotion from ſuch a means of mortification; if ſome forms of Prayer, eſpecially ſuch as gave occaſion to this Diſpute, do now ſeem to be as bread to the hungry, we ſay no more but this, then hungry ſouls will never be ſtarved, that never want ſtore of ſuch like bread as this is.

Diſc. *The ample and particular laying out of our neceſſities doth eaſe the heart, and move affections,*

and when this may be better done by the help of a Book in prayer then of our ſelves, it is ſenſeleſſe to accuſe the uſe hereof, as a lip-labour, and a quenching of the ſpirit; he ſtinteth not the Spirit that labours to blow the coals of grace, &c.

Anſw. It is true, he ſtinteth not the Spirit, nor quencheth him; that uſeth any means ſanctified by the Spirit to blow the coals of grace; but this we deny, that a ſtinted form of prayer upon a book, deviſed by men, and enjoyned to be uſed as the prayers of a Chriſtian ſoul, is a means ſanctified by the Spirit to blow the coals of his grace; or that the repeating of ſuch a ſet form of Prayer, though ample and particular in laying out his neceſſities, will eaſe his heart, or move his affections according to God; God doth not delight ordinarily to breath in the Maſterly injunctions of brethren upon brethren, or of one Congregation upon another, eſpecially in ſuch things whereof we have neither precept nor preſident in the Word.

Diſc. *He doth not ſubſtitute his Chriſtian friend, in the place of the word, and Spirit, who not able to lift up his ſoul to God, by reaſon of ſtraightneſſe of heart, and grievous preſſure, doth crave his help and aſſiſtance in prayer, and may not a godly Book ſupply the want of a Chriſtian companion?*

Anſw. It is an ordinance of God, to crave the help of the Prayers of our brethren, and to joyn with them; ſhew the like warrant for Prayer upon a book, preſcribed to us, and then we will grant a godly book may ſupply even in this caſe the lacke of a Chriſtian companion;

If

If a Miniſter be not able to preach by reaſon of the ſtraightneſſe of his heart, and grievous preſſure, he may get his Chriſtian friend to preach for him; but he may not make uſe of a godly homily enjoyned to him by others, to ſupply the lack of a Chriſtian friend.

Diſc. *Why ſhould it be a ſin to read or pronounce a godly form of Prayer, is it for that it is read and pronounced, or becauſe a man cannot liſt up his heart in faith unto God, when he uttereth his requeſts in a ſtinted form of words; to aſſigne the former, is ſuperſtition: To ſay the latter is to offend againſt common experience?*

Anſw. We do not ſay it is a ſin to read or pronounce a godly form of Prayer; but to read a form of Prayer deviſed by others, and to ſet it a part to read, being deviſed by others enjoyned to me as my Prayer; This is ſin, not becauſe it is pronounced, for all publique Prayer is pronounced; nor alwayes in private, becauſe it is read; for (as hath been ſaid) a man may go along in his ſpirit, and be affected with ſome Prayer, which occaſionally he readeth, and may liſt up his own heart in it to the Lord; but a ſin it is, as it is ſet apart by himſelfe for his Prayer; or as it is ſo enjoyned to him by others; and in publique it is of ſin, both becauſe it is read, as the Prayer of the Church (and ſo another book brought into the Church beſides Gods Book) And becauſe it is deviſed, not by the gift of Gods Spirit in themſelves, but in others, and alſo becauſe by other it is preſcribed or enjoyned to be read, as the ſervice, and

worship of God in another Church: For we do not find that ever God gave warrant either for the offering up of read Prayers to God, as the ordinary prayers of the Church; and least of all for Prayers prescribed and enjoyned by one Church unto another.

It is so far off from superstition to affirm this, that we look at it as a superstition to deny it; for to speak of superstition according to the true nature of it (and not according to the old Etymologie) If superstition be *cultus supra statutum*, there is none of all these kinds, whether as read upon a book in the Congregation, for their ordinary Prayers; or devised by men of other Congregations for that end; or as imposed upon us by them: but they are all of them, and each one of them, *cultus supra statutum*, worships and helps, and forms of worship which never came into Gods heart to allow for his statute and worship.

Disc. *Will any man object, that read prayer is not Gods Ordinance? It hath been answered already, that prayer is the ordinance of God; but whether our prayers be onely conceived in heart, or uttered by words; whether in our own, or other words; whether by pronouncing or reading, that is not appointed; when spake he one word of prayer within Book or without, in this or that form of words?*

Answ. Reply hath been made hereto before; as Prayer is an Ordinance of God, so are all the lawfull helps and means and forms of Prayer: God hath plainly expressed his allowance of Prayer conceived in the heart, and of prayer uttered

uttered, and pronounced by words both in our own words, and in the words of others, whom God calleth to be our mouths in the preſent aſſembly: but of ſet forms of read prayer deviſed by men of another Congregation, and preſcribed and impoſed upon others; it may juſtly be demanded, when did God ſpeak one word of them? And therefore, what have we to do with them? If it be ſaid as God never ſpake word of reading Prayer within book, ſo never did he ſpeak word of pronouncing Prayer without Book; the Text doth plainly enough expreſſe the contrary; for the Word of God ſpeaketh expreſſely, that Chriſt lift up his eyes to Heaven in Prayer, *John* 17. 1. & 11. 41. ſo did *David*, Pſalm 123. 1. and God hath ingraffed it in the hearts of all his people, to expreſſe the lifting up of their ſouls, their faith and hope, and deſires to God, by lifting up their eyes ſtedfaſtly to Heaven in Prayer, yea, God hath ingraffed it in the hearts of all men, and even put ſome kind of inſtinct into all living creatures, to lift up their eyes to Heaven for what they want, *Pſal.* 145. 15. Now, if the lifting up of the eyes to Heaven in Prayer be expreſly mentioned in the Word, then how can it be truly ſaid, that God never ſpake word of Prayer without Book? for they that lift up their eyes ſtedfaſtly to Heaven in Prayer, cannot (without ſome diſtractions) caſt them down in Prayer upon a book, if lifting up of the eyes to Heaven in Prayer, be a divine Inſtitution (as the *Diſcourſe* ſaid even now) if it be

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an externall means to help the affection of the ſpirit in Prayer) then it is againſt the Inſtitution, and an hinderance to Prayer, inſtead of an help, to ſet a mans ſelf or others, a form of read Prayers, wherein whileſt he is reading he muſt uſually caſt down his eyes upon a Book.

CHAP. VI.

Tending to give Anſwer unto the fifth Reaſon.

Diſc. *WHere there is no breach of Law, there is no ſin: But the uſe of a preſcript form of Prayer is no breach of Law, or of any Commandement of God.*

Anſw. It hath been ſhewed above that it is a breach of the ſecond Commandement more wayes than one, to deviſe and uſe a ſimilitude and form, and means of worſhip, which God never appointed, and ſuch is the reading of a ſet form of Prayer, for the Prayers of the Church.

2. It is an uſurpation of more than Prophetical, or Apoſtolicall authority, to preſcribe a ſet form of *Lyturgie*, to the Churches, and a greater uſurpation for one Congregation to preſcribe the ſame to another, which is a ſin both againſt the ſecond and fifth Commandements.

3. It

3. It is a sinfull and disloyall betraying of the souls of Magistrates to countenance their intruding such prescript forms of Prayer, upon Churches, by taking up the same forms from them, which they have not authority from God to injoyne, and stifly to plead for them, a sin forbidden in the fifth and sixth Commandements.

4. It is a sinfull betraying of Christian Liberty, which Christ hath purchased to every Church of his by his precious blood: For one Church voluntarily to take up the Injunctions and prescriptions of another, contrary to *Col.* 2. 20, 22. which argument may be applyed another way, by a Testimony from the book of Common-Prayer, Gods Service is perfect Freedome, but the reading of a set form of Prayer devised, and prescribed by others is not perfect freedome (for many would be right glad to be freed from it) therefore such reading of prayers is not Gods service.

5. It is a sinfull breach of the rule of decency, to offer up prayers to God in such a form, as cannot well stand with that decent gesture which is most sutable to Prayer, It is a gesture most sutable to Prayer; to lift it up to God as with hearts and hands, so with eyes stedfastly lift up to Heaven: But this gesture cannot fitly, and stedfastly be used, in read Prayer, where the eyes must be usually cast down upon the Book.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Wherein Answer is returned to the sixth Reason.

Disc. *IF a set form of prayer be disallowed, then a prescript form of Catechisme and Confession must of necessity be condemned; but how absurd this is he is very blind, or willfull that seeth not, the necessity, antiquity and excellency of catechising, is known to them that know any thing, touching the building and governing the House of God.*

Answ. Touching set forms of Catechisme, we have answered twice before in clearing some objections against the first Reason: whereto we refer you, it hath been already shewed us, that God himselfe hath set before us sundry forms of Catechisme. *Davids* Catechisme was of one form, *Psal.* 34. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Solomons* of another, *Prov.* 4. The *Apostles* of another, *Heb.* 6. 2. Yea, the *Apostles* name the heads of their Catechisme, but neither propound the questions, nor answers them in use, An evident Argument they never meant to bind Churches to set forms of Catechisme: The excellent and necessary use of catechizing young men, and novices (as hath been said before) we willingly acknowledge: But little benefit have we seen reaped from set forms of questi-

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ons, and anſwers deviſed by one Church, and impoſed by neceſſity upon another: They muſt look at them with coloured Spectacles, that can diſcern them: The like may be ſaid of forms of Confeſſions, when a Church is ſuſpected and ſlandered with corrupt and unſound Doctrine, they have a call from God, to ſet forth a publique confeſſion of their faith. But to preſcribe the ſame as the confeſſion of the faith of that Church to their poſterity, or to preſcribe the confeſſion of one Church to be a form, and pattern unto others, ſad experience hath ſhewed what a ſnare it hath been to both, nothing in after ages muſt be held for a doctrine of the Church (though never ſo neceſſary a truth) unleſſe it were found amongſt the Articles of Religion agreed upon by their fathers, in the confeſſion of their Faith.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Giving Anſwer to the ſeaventh Reaſon.

Diſc. *IT is lawfull to aske common bleſſings of God dayly in a ſet form of words*; Ergo. *It is not unlawfull to uſe a ſet form of Prayer; and if to pronounce it, to read it alſo: for reading of it ſelfe, is not impure, as pronouncing cannot make an evill matter good, no more can reading make a good matter evill, pronouncing and reading being Adjunctſ in prayer both indifferent.*

Anſw. Firſt, the *Queſtion* with us is not ſo much about ſet forms of prayer in generall, as about ſet forms of Prayer deviſed by men of other Churches, preſcribed, and injoyned to be read as the Prayers of the Church, or deviſed by one Chriſtian, and ſet apart by another, as his prayers, to which this Argument reacheth not.

Though we do not deny it to be altogether unlawfull to ſeek common bleſſings of God daily in a ſet form of words, yet we would not encourage men to reſt and content themſelves in ſo doing, much leſſe to bind themſelves ſo to do: For beſides that, a daily ſet form will eaſily degenerate to a formallity, how can a Chriſtian be ſaid to watch unto prayer (which we are commanded

commanded to do, *Eph.* 6. 18.) If we content our ſelves with the ſame ſet form of prayer, this year, as the laſt: Beſides, the common daily bleſſings, which the *Diſcourſer* inſtanceth in; as faith, patience, meekneſſe, love, ſanctification of Gods name. Coming of Chriſts Kingdome, the ſtate of theſe things doth ever and anon vary, and to bind a mans ſelfe daily to a ſet form of prayer, for ſuch things as the ſtate whereof is ſo daily varied, will bring in a looſe and Incongruous kind of prayers, fit only for thoſe, that do not diſcern, or are not affected with the preſent ſtate of things, either in themſelves, or others.

When it is ſaid, if it be lawfull to pronounce a ſet form of prayer, then to read it; If the meaning be to read it, for a prayer, the conſequence is not firm, for though (as the *Diſcourſer* ſaith) the reading of prayer is not impure: Yet the praying of read prayers is the uſing of ſuch a Crutch to pray (as he ſpeaketh) which God hath not appointed, and that maketh ſuch reading impure: And though pronouncing cannot make an evill matter good, nor ſimply reading make a good matter evill, yet reading to ſuch an end, reading a ſet form of prayer, preſcribed to me for my prayer, maketh to me a Will-worſhip of that which he that conceived the prayer might lawfully have pronounced.

The pronouncing of a good Sermon by him that made it, is a good and acceptable ſervice to God, and his Church: But to read a Sermon

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as my preaching, which was made by another, maketh it neither so acceptable to God, nor to his Church, yea the reading of a mans own Sermon instead of preaching will much detract from the life and power of it, and make a man of God unserviceable for his place: Though reading and pronouncing of a thing, be both of them adjuncts, and common adjuncts too, to that which is pronounced or read, yet according to the ends and subjects, to which they may be applyed, the one may be lawfull, the other not indifferent but sinfull, the reading of a Sermon for preaching, is a sinfull manner of preaching; The difference will ever hold between the word read, and preached: They are two distinct Ordinances.

CHAP. IX.

Answering unto the eight Reason.

THe Jewes before the coming of Christ used a prescript form of Prayer (as it is probable, and the learned note) *in the celebration of the Passover, and that which they used* (as is very probable) *was approved by Christ himself.*

Answ. That the *Jewes* before the coming of Christ, did use certain Rites in keeping the Passover, It doth appear by the Testimonies alledged

ged, as also by *Causabon*, and others: And that some forms of Prayer they used, according as the severall passages of the Passeover required: But it doth not at all appear that they used any set forms of Prayer, but onely to that end the like effect, and that not by Prescript or injunction from one to another, but leaving every father of a family at his liberty therein, much lesse will it appear that our Lord Jesus Christ, took up any set forms of Prayer by their example and least of all from their Injunction.

CHAP. X.

Giving Answer to the ninth Reason.

Misc. *ALL the reformed Churches at this day, do not only tollerate, but approve a set form of Liturgie, &c.*

Answ. We count it a safe course to bewail our own sins and the sins of our fathers, wherein we have polluted the holy things of God, more or lesse, rather than to justifie our own deviations from the rule by their presidents; great cause we have to blesse the Lord for the great light which the instruments whom God used in reforming all Protestant Churches

brought into the dark world, and left behind them: and yet it is well known in some thing or other, all of them, more or lesse failed: and it is more wonder they should see so much truth out of the midst of darknesse, then that they who saw so much, should fall in any thing but wherein soever they failed the generation that have come after them, have too closely and ungodly stuck to their examples, yea, and have been more zealous in the defence thereof, than have sought to perfect what they left defective; yet this we may truly affirm, that we know none of all the reformed forraign Churches that do prescribe a set form of Prayer with necessity to be observed; but leave their Minister at liberty to use the same, or some other form to the like effect at their own direction, which taketh off a great part of sin and burthen of set forms; God knoweth how to passe by the remnant of iniquity of the transgression of them that seek him in truth, although all the high places be not taken away, 2 *Chron.* 15. 17. The Lord did not so look at their high places, as to reject his people for Idolaters or Superstitious Persons, when they sought him in (truth of heart) though in high places; neither yet would he justifie their high places to after Ages, by the example and authority of their Ancestors: farre be it from us to censure the present Churches of obstinacy, who have persisted in the presidents left by our holy ancestors, those first reformed; yet neither may we be so unfaithfull as to sowe Pillowes under

the Elbows, no, not of publique Churches, who knoweth not they have all been more studious and tenacious of what form the doctrine and worship, and discipline was left unto them, then inquisitive after farther light, yea, sometimes more inclinable to look back into *Ægypt*, than to hasten towards *Canaan*; it is true, we have cause to suspect our selves of error, rather than so many glorious lights of former and present times (to wit) if our faith were built upon our selves, we should prefer their judgements and testimony before our own; but seeing our faith resteth only on the word of the Lord, and his Spirit breathing therein, and the Word hath promised more and more light shall break forth in these times, till *Antichrist* be utterly consumed and abolished; we shall sin against the Grace and Word of truth if we confine our truth, either to the Divines of present or former ages.

Disc. *Be that all the Churches may erre in this, yet I hope no moderate man can censure them of obstinacy, as men not willing to consent to the truth shewed and manifested; how then cometh it to passe, that none of them hitherto have subscribed to this opinion, and to the practice of our brethren of the Separation? The true Churches of God cannot erre fundamentally, nor obstinately against knowledge; but how can they be freed from one of these, let the opposites themselves judge.*

Anſw. Though we do not believe (as you do) that the true Churches of Chriſt cannot erre fundamentally, but doe conceive for a time they may (as the Church of *Iſrael* in the golden Calfe, and afterwards more dangerouſly in the crucifying of Chriſt, and many Chriſtian Churches almoſt all, in that time, when *Hierome* complaineth the whole world was become an *Arian*) yet we do not look at the reading of deviſed preſcript forms, as a fundamentall error: howbeit any error or ſin perſiſted in againſt light, will in time argue an unſound and corrupt heart in the bottom. And although we dare not excuſe true Churches (as you do) from poſſibility of obſtinacy, at leaſt in ſome degree (for we ſee *Moſes* and the Prophets often taxing the Church of *Iſrael* of rebellion and obſtinacy, *Deut.* 31. 27. *Jer.* 22. 21. *Ezek.* 3. 7.) yet we dare not think that the Churches of Chriſt do ſin of obſtinacy (eſpecially of reigning obſtinacy) in this caſe; For many of them never ſaw the grounds, as have born witneſſe againſt ſet and preſcript read forms of Prayer; and thoſe that have ſeen their grounds, have not been convinced of the ſolidity of them; and therefore may not be charged with obſtinacy, till after they have been convict of ſinne herein, and yet perſiſt herein againſt light of conſcience, which God forbid.

Thu Reaſon (from the judgement and practice of other Churches) hath been wont to be of great

great force in former times; otherwise the Apostle would never have alledged the practise and consent of the Churches to confirm the faithfull, and to stop the mouths of the contentious, Acts 15. 22. 28. 1 Cor. 11. 16. and 14. 34.

Answ. The Argument from the practice and judgement of Churches, was of greater force in the Apostles time than ever since: the estate of the Churches as then remained *tanquam intemerata virgo*, whilest the Apostles and the Apostolique men lived; men that could not erre themselves; and were more watchfull and zealous than to suffer any error to get head in any of the Churches; but let them that press the like argument now, let them shew us the like infallibillity, vigilancy and zeal, of the guides of the Churches in these dayes; and we shall readily captivate our own judgements to such divine testimony: otherwise the judgement of Churches now, being but humane testimony (unlesse it might appear grounded in Scripture warrant) we only hearken thus far to an Argument taken from the Churches, as reverently and meekly to attend to it, and if it dissent from Scripture, yet still to bear with meeknesse and patience, and brotherly love, any failing which is found in them; but not therefore to approve and justifie all their proceedings.

CHAP. XI.

Touching the other Question of the peoples joyning in prayer with the reading of a devised prescript Liturgie.

FInally, your Discourse cometh along to make good a third assertion, which you had at first made a part of the state of the Question, to wit,

Disc. *That though it were unlawfull for the Ministers to use a prescript form of prayer; yet no reason can be shewed, why it should be unwarrantable for the people to be present at such prayers and assemblies.*

Answ. We conceive that good reason may be shewed. Why, if it be unlawfull for the Minister to pray upon a book, a devised and prescript form of prayer: it is unlawfull likewise for the people so to be present at it, as to joyn with it, or seem to joyn with it.

Our first reason is taken from the unity of the Church, if the Officers or Ministers, and all the

the members of the Church be one body, (as they are ſaid to be, 1 Cor. 10. 17.) the ſinne of the Miniſter of the Church openly committed in the publique worſhip of God, is the ſin of them all that do joyne with him, and do not bear witneſſe againſt his ſinne according to God.

A ſecond Reaſon may be taken from the compactneſſe of Gods worſhip, and communion which all the members in the Church have in it; all the worſhip of God in the Churches of Chriſt, is put up to God, as well by the people as by the Miniſters ὁμοθυμαδὸν with one accord, *Acts* 1. 14. The Prayer of the Miniſter is the Prayer of them; the matter of his prayer is the matter of all their prayers; the form of his prayer (I ſpeak of the externall form, which is that wherein they can joyn) is the form of them; if then it be unlawfull for the Miniſter to pray upon a book, a deviſed preſcript form of prayer: it is alike unlawfull for the people to joyn with him.

Diſc. *The people are commanded to examine themſelves before they draw nigh unto the preſence of God, but not to examine whether the Miniſters pray in one form or other.*

Anſw. The members of the Church are not indeed to examine the ſecret ſins of any but themſelves, but the open ſins of any of their brethren, they ought to admoniſh one ano-

ther thereof, and to prevent with holy watchfullneſſe the ſinnes of one another, elſe the ſin of one *Achan* becometh the ſin and plague of all *Iſrael*, *Joſhua* 7. 11, 12.

Diſc. *If the Miniſter pray coldly, (as they ſay all reading of ſtinted forms maketh but cold prayer: a drawing nigh to God with the lips; when the heart is far from him) yet this is the fault of the Miniſter only, not of all that are preſent, for ſuch may be the Miniſters fault to pray coldly, even in a conceived forme.*

Anſw. Firſt, We do not ſay (for our parts) that all praying upon a book or inſtituted forms, is but cold prayer, becauſe God may pardon the ignorance of his people, and accept the ſincerity of their hearts, help them with ſome ſpirituall affections, even in ſuch prayers, howbeit, a form of prayer not allowed of God will not (of it ſelf) affect the heart with heavenly warmth, neither do we ſay that the coldneſſe of the Miniſters heart in prayer, if it ſpring from the inward corruption of his own ſpirit, doth wrap the people into the fellowſhip of the ſame ſinne, *de ſecretis non Judicat Eccleſia*, nor is it defiled by the tolleration of ſecret ſins in others.

But if the people be convinced, that the reading of prayer upon a book preſcribed to them by man, is a ſin againſt the ſecond Commandement, and ſo no true help or means of Gods worſhip,

worship, is therefore some hinderance and impediment to it, then the people shall be guilty, not only of the fellowship of those forms of Prayer, but also of the coldness of the Ministers heart therein, if they willingly joyn in that which corrupteth and cooleth his spirit.

Disc. *Coldnesse and lip-labour in prayer is not helped with Separation, but by joyning the inward affections of the heart with the outward Service.*

Answ. True, if the coldnesse spring onely from the corruption of the Ministers heart, and not from the unsanctified means and helplesse help of Prayer which he useth, to wit, a prescript form of book-prayer; but as no man can wash his hands from sin, that removeth not away all outward occasions of such sin, as much as in him lyeth, from himself and others, so no man can be freed from the guilt of such coldnesse as the Minister and the people do contract by the customary use of such devised prescript forms of Prayer, if he do not so much as in him lyeth remove such occasions of evil from them.

Disc. *The Jewes used a stinted form of prayer (or Liturgie) in the Synagogues, at the celebration of the Passeover, before the dayes of our Saviour Christ; yet Christ never perswaded the people to absent themselves, nor did he withdraw himself, but resorted*

resorted to their Synagogues, and the Temple; as did also his Apostles after his ascension.

Answ. Of the Jewish forms of Prayer, we have spoken before, And have justly denied that they took up any book prayers, devised by others prescribed to them; and therefore no marvell if neither Christ nor his Apostles withdrew themselves from them; seeing the outward face of administrations, was only of Gods Ordinances, not of the inventions of men, at the least so farre as not to draw them into fellowship or communion with them therein; the corruptions found amongst them, both in doctrine and worship Christ and his Apostles did freely bear witnesse against, both to themselves, and the people.

Disc. *It is not lawfull to separate from the Churches or assemblies of the Saints, in whose fellowship we may serve God with an holy worship, and believe in him with an holy faith; for if a prayer conceived in the heart and uttered with the voice be a pure service of God, the same read upon a book, becometh not impure to them that hear it with holy affections.*

Answ. We do not separate from the Church and assembly of the Saints, but willingly joyn with you in every part of your holy worship; and in every doctrine of your holy faith only we withdraw our selves from such parts of your administrations, wherein we cannot

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joyn with you, but wrap our selves into the fellowship of such sin which (in our consciences) we see committed by you: How the same Prayer conceived by the spirit of a Minister, and pronounced in his own, and in the peoples name to God, may be a pure service to God, yet the same written in a book, and prescribed to others to be read by them as their Prayers, may be an unlawfull form of worship hath been shewed above; it is wearisome to repeat the same things so often.

Disc. *Lastly, The Scribes and the Pharisees sinned grievously in corrupting the Law with their false glosses, and defiling the worship of God with their own inventions; nevertheless, the faithfull held fellowship and communion with them in the worship of God; and that by the approbation of the Prophets, and of Christ himself; but surely the health of the Church is more crazed by such great infirmities, than by the onely toleration and use of a prescript form of prayer.*

Answ. The substance of this objection hath been answered even now; the faithfull did, and might lawfully joyn in worshiping God in his own Ordinances, notwithstanding the accidentall pollution which the Scribes and Pharisees brought in, both in doctrine and worship; for corruptions in doctrine do not draw the hearers into fellowship of the same faith: if they beware of the leaven of such doctrine, and bear witnesse against it; in time and place according

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to God; & as for the pollutions in worship, they chiefly lay in their private superstitious devotions, of washing their hands, and pots, and cups, and brazen vessels, and not in their outward administrations of publique Ordinances; especially in such wherein their act and the peoples was offered up together with one accord; but there is not the like reason of publique Prayer, wherein both Minister and people do all joyn together, as one man, with one accord; where any known sin in the outward administration of the Minister is the sin of all the people that joyn with him. The Lord give us hearts to deny our selves, and to sit close to him; that he may delight to lead us on by his spirit of truth, in all truth and goodnesse; and still delight to be mercifull to us, in pardoning and healing all our forms and present pollutions, for his holy Names sake in Jesus Christ, *Amen, Amen.*

FINIS.